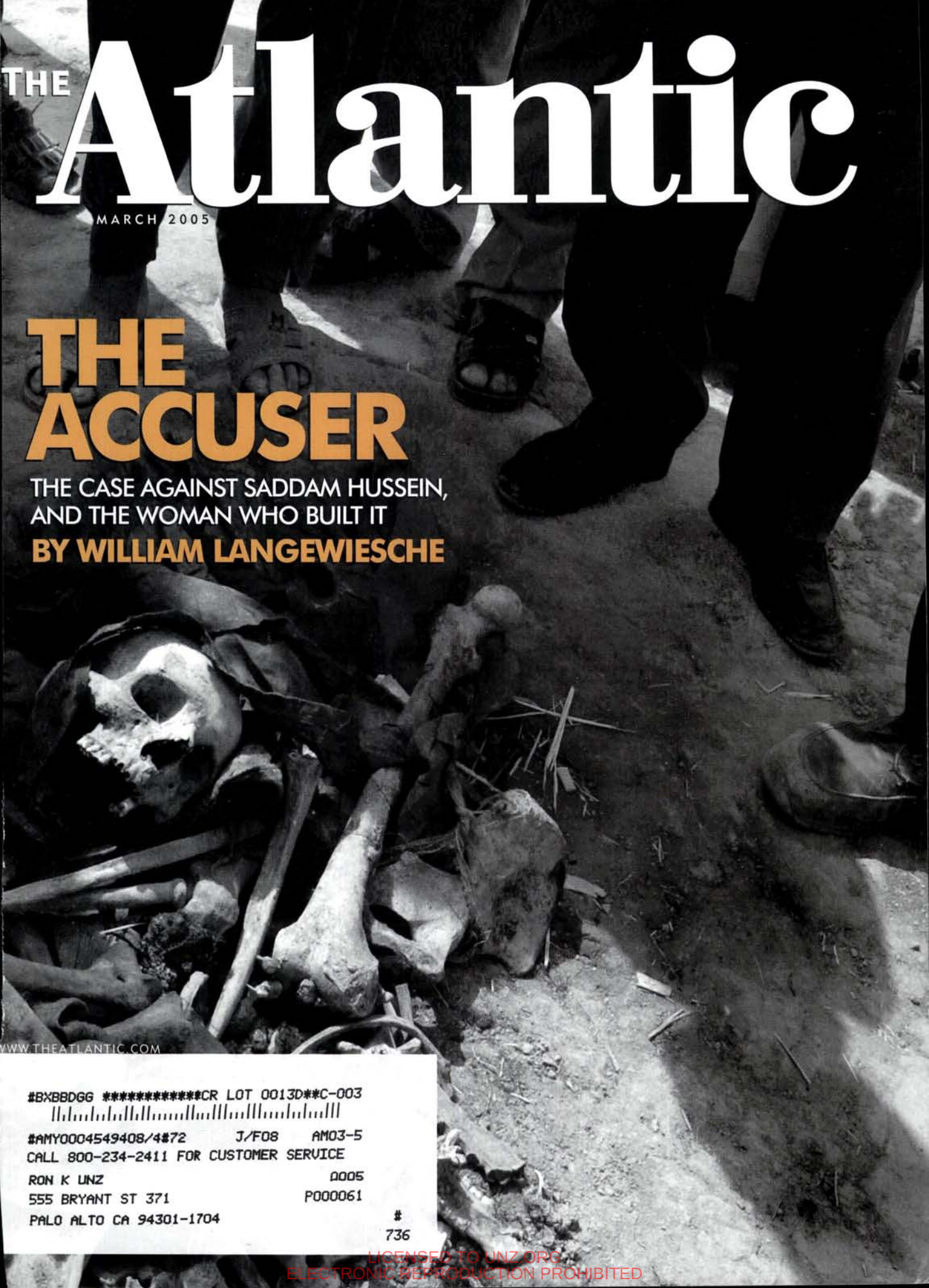




THE Atlantic

MARCH 2005

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AND THE WOMAN WHO BUILT IT

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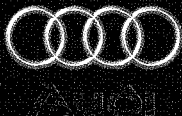
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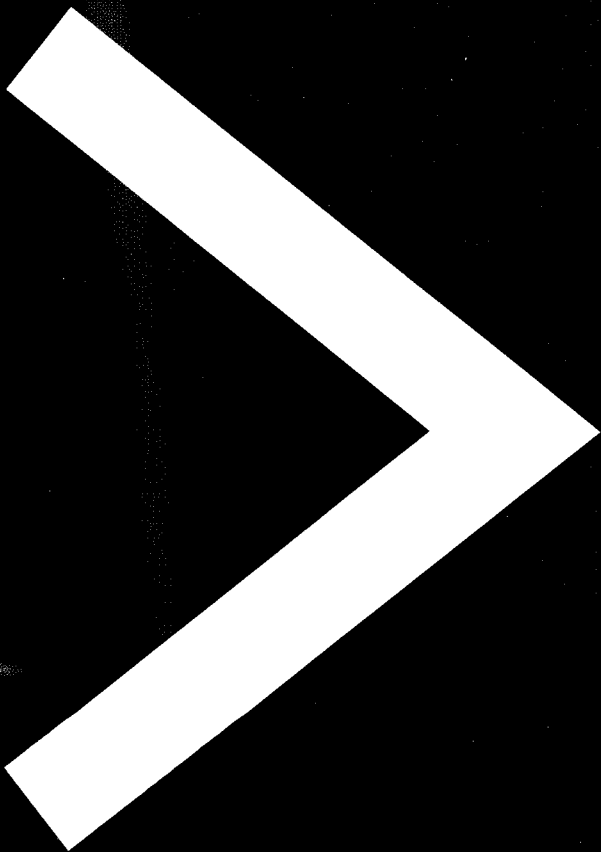
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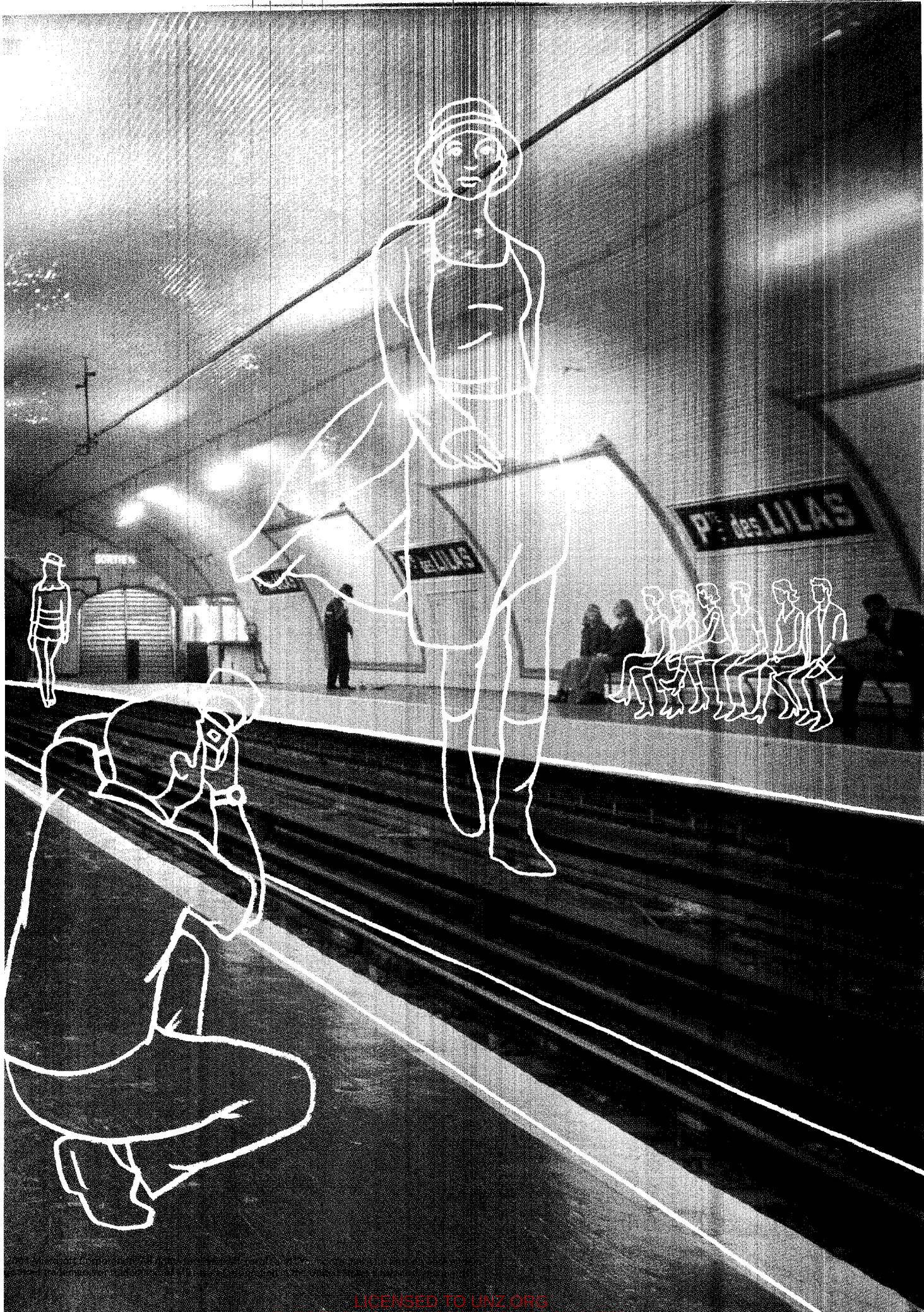
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*Cover: Iraqi mass grave site, May 2003,
photograph by Francesco Zizola/Magnum Photos;
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milestones in luxury

- 1886 The tuxedo makes its debut in New York City.
- 1893 Kokichi Mikimoto successfully produces the first cultured pearl.
- 1924 The Montblanc Meisterstück fountain pen is introduced.
- 1936 Dom Pérignon champagne made available.
- 1956 Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater is completed.
- 1968 The first Rolex Oyster Perpetual Datejust is introduced.

milestones in transportation

- 1869 The Transcontinental Railroad is completed.
- 1892 America's first gas-powered automobile is invented.
- 1903 The first motorized airplane is flown at Kitty Hawk, NC.
- 1936 The Queen Mary makes her maiden voyage.
- 1945 Blind inventor Ralph Teagarden's first jazz recording is released.
- 1964 The first Concorde is flown.

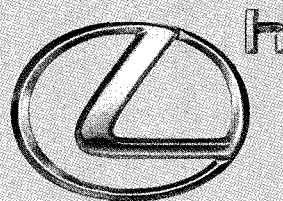
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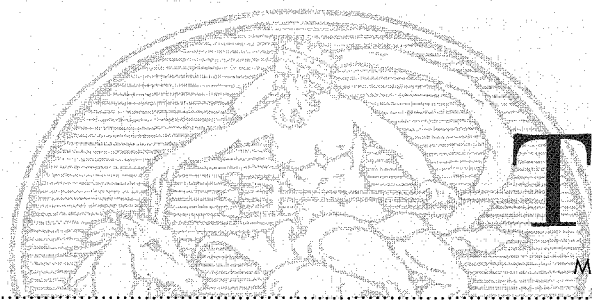
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Rose Douthat

The author of "The Truth About Harvard" talks about the social and academic realities behind the mystique of an Ivy League education.

DOCUMENTS

The Case Against Saddam

A look at some of the files—compiled by human-rights researchers over the past twenty years—documenting the horrors of Saddam's Iraq.

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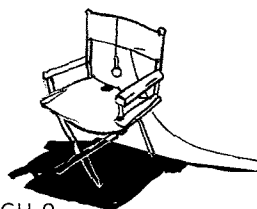
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MARCH 4

ESPN Launches (Another!) Network, Fights Feds

Shortly before "March Madness" begins, on the 15th, ESPN will launch its first college-sports network, ESPNU. Interested spectators will include the Justice Department, which has quietly been pursuing an anti-trust investigation of ESPN for such practices as "warehousing" (buying broadcast rights for a conference but airing only the top football and basketball games) and forcing teams to schedule games at odd hours in order to receive coverage. ESPNU's added coverage should help mitigate these practices.

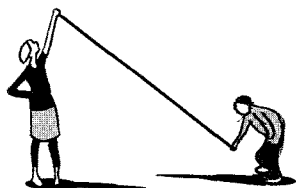


MARCH 9

Dan Rather Retires

When Dan Rather assumed the anchor's chair at CBS, upon Walter Cronkite's retirement, he was reportedly so cowed by his predecessor's reputation that he refused to sit in the actual chair Cronkite had used, and crouched behind the anchor desk. Thus began a long, strange ride. "Gunga Dan" dressed as a *mujahid* for a trip to Afghani-

stan (the Soviets claimed he killed three villagers there), sparred with Republican presidents, and was once the victim of an inexplicable physical attack by someone demanding, "Kenneth, what is the frequency?" Rather remains a *60 Minutes* correspondent.



MARCH 12

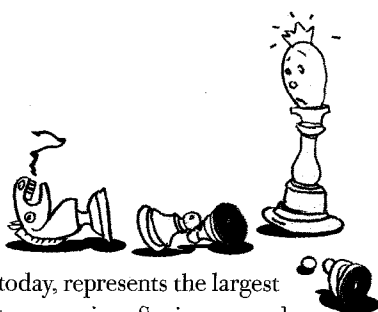
New and Improved SATs

So you scored 1600? On the new SAT, making its debut today, that wouldn't even get you into Brown. The Educational Testing Service, which designs the SAT, has added a written-essay component and a new reading portion and removed analogies and quantitative comparisons; the math section also includes some second-year algebra. A perfect score is now 2400 (and the new average score is expected to be around 1520). The revised SAT was prompted in part by the University of California's threat to drop the old test. In the past the SAT routinely underestimated women's college performance. Women, who tend to perform better on the writing sample, are expected to see a slight increase in their scores.

MARCH 15

The Shrinking Coalition

Although eight countries have already pulled out of the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, the Netherlands' departure, scheduled for today, represents the largest withdrawal—some 1,300 troops—since Spain removed the same number last spring. The Dutch, performing security and stability operations in southern Iraq, have suffered two fatalities, one in a grenade attack and one in a firefight.



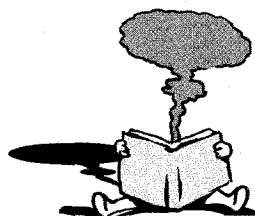
CALENDAR

WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

MARCH 16

Corporate Crunch Time

Passed just after the wave of financial scandals in 2002, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act aims to improve corporate behavior by requiring large publicly traded companies to prove they have fraud control in nearly every aspect of corporate life, from the paychecks given current employees to clearances revoked from fired ones. The deadline for most companies' reports is today, but according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers survey, only 20 percent will have addressed their faults in time. While there is no fine for noncompliance, offending companies will probably see their stock prices drop when their accounting trouble becomes public.

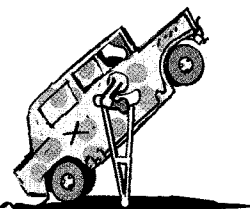


MARCH 31

WMD Snafu Report

Last year President Bush grudgingly agreed to an independent investigation of the flawed pre-war intelligence on purported Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The intelligence commission, whose report is due today, has a broad mandate and may look at the nuclear distribution network led by the Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan; Iran and Libya's nuclear development programs; and possibly the failure to predict nuclear detonations by Pakistan and India. Critics fear that the result will

be less attention paid to the bad intelligence about Iraq's (non-existent) weapons of mass destruction. The report comes three months *after* Congress finished work on the largest restructuring of the intelligence community in half a century (over that period there have been at least twenty-one other intelligence commissions).



MARCH 31

Armored Humvees, at Last

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was caught off guard in December when, during a question-and-answer session, a U.S. soldier asked him why troops had to scrounge through local landfills to outfit their trucks with makeshift protection ("hillbilly armor" in military slang). "You go to war with the army you have," Rumsfeld replied. Even before Rumsfeld's embarrassment the Army had rushed to armor its trucks after realizing that it had underestimated the scope and tenacity of the Iraqi resistance. The final shipment of the 8,000 armored Humvees ordered last fall is due to arrive this month, along with armor kits for another 12,800 (out of 30,000 total). About half of all U.S. troop casualties have been caused by improvised explosive devices—typically roadside bombs.

—MATTHEW QUIRK

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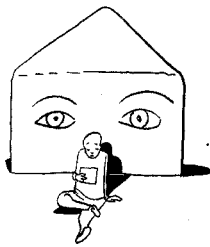
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

State of the Union

Jonathan Rauch, in “Bipolar Disorder” (January/February *Atlantic*), cites my book *The Values Divide* as a source for much of the commentary as to whether and how deeply we are *about* cultural values. I am also the unnamed source who stated that Americans live in “parallel universes.”

Rauch is correct that political elites are highly polarized on the basis of cultural values. But this is so because Americans have made it so. Today lifestyle choices and values preferences directly correlate with partisanship. Married voters—especially those with children under the age of seventeen, living at home—and frequent church attendees vote Republican in large numbers. Single voters, unmarried couples, and infrequent churchgoers vote overwhelmingly Democratic. Polls taken by Zogby International consistently find that voters in these different demographic categories also make different cultural choices. For example, 43 percent of Bush supporters saw *The Passion of the Christ*; 65 percent of Kerry backers saw *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Cable television, Internet blogs, and other technologies that promote market segmentation only serve to ratify voters’ instinctive predilections.

Something is amiss in American politics when exit polls showed moderates voting for John Kerry by nine points and independents by one point, and still Kerry lost. Although the polar extremes have always been with us at the elite and mass levels, the absence of a “vital center” makes today’s politics different.

Alan Wolfe has described the twenty-first century as an age of “moral freedom.” Redefining interpersonal relationships means that Americans have a greater number of choices than ever before. It is in these choices that politics, partisanship, and values have become intertwined. The result is an electorate

whose highly polarized nature shows up in polling data in race after race. As Tom Robbins wrote in his novel *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*, “Until humans can solve their philosophical problems, they’re condemned to solve their political problems over and over and over again. It’s a cruel, repetitious bore.”

John Kenneth White
The Life Cycle Institute
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

In “Bipolar Disorder,” Jonathan Rauch makes an eloquent and compelling case that the American nation isn’t as polarized as the national parties. He also identifies the major causes of partisan polarization—gerrymandering and the selection of candidates by ideological activists rather than the local party machines of the old days. However, his conclusions—that partisan polarization can be beneficial and we should learn to love it—do not follow from his analysis. The present system, created only in the past thirty years, can be changed.

The most radical change would be to abandon our eighteenth-century first-past-the-post voting system, which tends to produce two-party cartels, for some version of proportional representation, which most modern democracies use to elect their legislators. If that seems too exotic, there is the alternative vote or instant-runoff voting (IRV), which is now used to elect city officials in San Francisco. Voters rank candidates in order of preference, and if nobody initially wins 50 percent, then second- and third-choice votes are redistributed until a winner emerges. Unlike the first-past-the-post system, IRV rewards moderate candidates who appeal to more than one party.

Changing electoral rules nationwide is a long-term project. For the foreseeable future we are stuck with first-past-the-post and two major parties. Why not change the Republicans and

the Democrats back into what Rauch says they once were—“loose coalitions of interests and regions” rather than “ideological clubs”? If primaries dominated by zealots are the problem, why not abolish primaries? We don’t have to go back to the old system in which party bosses chose the candidates. The California gubernatorial-recall election, which installed the centrist Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor, showed us another way. Why not let the voters choose from many candidates, both partisan and independent, on the first ballot of a two-round election? There could be an actual runoff election a few weeks later among the top two vote-getters. Or an IRV ballot could produce the same result as a runoff, without the time and expense of a second election. Replacing party primaries with the first round in an actual or virtual runoff system would open up the ballot to new candidates and movements; it would reward centrist candidates with the broadest possible appeal and punish divisive ideologues; and it would tend to make gerrymandering futile.

Michael Lind
The New America Foundation
Washington, D.C.

Despite what Jonathan Rauch argues in “Bipolar Disorder,” there is clear evidence of an increased political divide in American public opinion. In the latest survey by the Pew Research Center a majority of Americans perceived a growing divide both in the nation generally and among people they know. That perception stems partly from close political elections but especially from differences over the war in Iraq, which not only has driven a wedge between Republicans and Democrats but has intensified the partisan gap over fundamental national-security questions, including the appropriate use of force and America’s place in the world.

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The Pew Research Center's longitudinal measures on basic political, economic, and social values, which date back to 1987, show that political polarization in public opinion is as great now as it was before the 1994 midterm elections, which ended four decades of Democratic control in Congress. Partisan divisions are not in themselves new, but the basis for today's divide is considerably different from that of the divide that existed a few years ago. During the 1990s attitudes toward government, welfare, and business—and also homosexuality—were the strongest predictors of a person's party preference. Today opinions about the efficacy of force versus that of diplomacy and the obligation of Americans to fight for their country are by far the strongest predictors. The partisan gap in basic national-security values has never been more pronounced. Attitudes toward the Iraq War color opinions on a number of security issues. Republicans have become decidedly more militant, while Democrats, if anything, have become less so.

The widespread hostility Republicans felt toward the federal government in the 1990s has dissipated now that their party controls all branches of that government. Democrats have become much stronger advocates for government's social safety net, and thus differ more sharply with Republicans over related issues.

Interestingly, the partisan gap on most social issues, while substantial, has not increased in recent years. Over the past decade the political spectrum has shifted decidedly in favor of tolerance on issues relating to homosexuality and race. Similarly, the partisan gap on abortion remains large, but it has not grown substantially since the 1990s. The public's values are not simply a portrait of partisanship; a number of consensus values endure. Nevertheless, the points of public agreement on major subjects have been largely overshadowed by differences over national-security issues and America's place in the world.

*Andrew Kohut
Pew Research Center
Washington, D.C.*

Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford DeLong ("Shaken and Stirred," January/February *Atlantic*) are correct that America is entering a new economic era that will pose a greater threat to the security of our middle class than what has come before. But I think they attribute too much of this to the offshoring of services, they're too pessimistic about the possibility that high-wage jobs will replace those that are lost, and their suggested remedies are way too modest given the challenge ahead.

While it's true that service jobs constitute 83 percent of our non-farm employment, most of these jobs are in person-to-person services such as retail, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, surface transportation, education, child care, elder care, and the construction trades. These won't go offshore, because they require direct contact between provider and recipient. The biggest threat to jobs like these comes not from foreigners but from new software applications. Automated supermarket checkout lines, airport e-ticket kiosks, online brokerage services, and similar innovations will continue to push workers toward giving customers more personalized, less standardized attention.

Yes, many professional jobs at the higher-wage end of the middle class are or will soon be vulnerable to the twin threats of new software and low-cost foreign professionals. But this trend doesn't necessarily mean fewer knowledge-intensive jobs in America. As professional services become low-cost commodities, demand shifts to more complex and tailored high-end services. Stockbrokers become personal financial consultants. Software programmers become business consultants offering customized applications. Architects spend more time designing, less time drafting. More of what end users seek, and pay for, involves getting exactly what they want: good advice and customized fits, new ideas about how their unique needs can be met by special applications, and implementation of such ideas. Workers with such skills are and will be in ever greater demand.

As to what should be done, by all means let's equip more of America's middle class to be agile, as Cohen and DeLong suggest—not only through portable health and pension benefits and career-transi-

tion assistance, but also with wage insurance! But if middle-class Americans are to be capable of doing the knowledge work of the future, we also have to make sure they get the education they need, starting in early childhood, continuing in K through 12 with small classes and well-trained teachers and good after-school programs, and extending through at least two years of college. And we have to provide them with affordable health care—not only as a good in itself, but also because healthier people are inherently more productive. In all these respects, I fear, America is now heading in exactly the opposite direction.

*Robert B. Reich
Former Secretary of Labor
Brandeis University
Waltham, Mass.*

As Stephen Cohen and J. Bradford DeLong generously acknowledge, I have spent the past several years examining the economic risks facing American families, using a combination of historical and programmatic evidence and the best available statistical data. My key finding is simple: on a variety of measures, Americans' economic lives are much more insecure than they were twenty or thirty—or even ten—years ago. It is well known that economic inequality has risen since the early 1970s. Yet my evidence shows that the growth in the instability of family incomes—how much they vary over time—has far outpaced the growth in inequality. And not only do Americans' incomes bob up and down more than they used to, but, according to my calculations, when incomes fall, families frequently find themselves in dire financial straits.

What is especially striking about these trends is that they occur against the backdrop of a tremendous social change that Cohen and DeLong conspicuously neglect to mention: the growing economic role of women outside the home. As the economists Maria Cancian and Deborah Reed have documented, the proportion of families in which women work hours comparable to men's more than doubled from 1970 to 2000—to more than 60 percent. This huge shift helped buoy family incomes during a period when wages for most



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men remained close to stagnant. As my evidence shows, however, the instability of family incomes also increased dramatically. The two-worker family is the ultimate in private risk-sharing. Yet it seems that not even this most fundamental of insurance arrangements has been able to cushion against shocks to family incomes.

Nor has government or the corporate sector stepped into the breach. To be sure, some programs have been expanded. But the broader trend within the public sector—one that President Bush currently hopes to further by partially privatizing Social Security—is toward ever greater private risk management. When I looked beneath the statistics, I was shocked to find that the cushioning effect of public taxes and transfers on families experiencing drops in income, significant in the early 1970s, had all but evaporated by the late 1990s. And, of course, corporate America is running away from the ideal of security even more quickly. Out with guaranteed retirement benefits, in with 401(k)s. Out with generous health coverage, in with high-deductible policies—or no policies at all.

What can be done to address these troubling trends? Cohen and DeLong say less than they might in response to this crucial question. But it is clear that the first rule should be Hippocrates': Do no harm. Whether the misguided idea is Social Security privatization, medical savings accounts, or a new tax system that undermines the income insurance provided by a progressive code, defenders of economic security should ensure that government does not add to the growing insecurity Americans already face. Our economy is more open than ever, and that openness should be preserved. But it needs to be coupled with a new generation of insurance protection against collective risks that citizens can't effectively deal with on their own. Too often our public sector parcels out risks one by one to a series of disjointed, categorical programs that inevitably leave glaring gaps. In an age of rapid change we need a general program of income insurance that provides catastrophic coverage against a wide range of risks—not just to a favored few but to all Americans.

This universal insurance could in turn be paired with new measures to encourage saving and wealth on the middle and lower rungs of the economic ladder. Call it an ownership and insurance society for all Americans.

*Jacob S. Hacker
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.*

It is gratifying to see concerns about the impact of global competition on living standards so well articulated by Stephen Cohen and J. Bradford DeLong. At the Economic Policy Institute we, often alone among economists, have raised these issues regarding blue-collar workers for years. One can't help wondering if some of this recent attention derives from the fact that global trade now has the potential to hurt not only those in old, dirty industries but also those in high-paying white-collar jobs—that is, folks like us.

But there's also a theoretical rationale. For decades economists have wielded the blunt ax of trade theory to push back against those of us who argued for addressing the damage inflicted on American workers by trade. Now, as the Nobel laureate Paul Samuelson warns, our competitors are coming after our comparative advantage (highly skilled workers), and the predicted outcomes from globalization are not nearly so unequivocally positive.

That said, I'd like to raise a couple of potentially hopeful points.

In a piece with many unsettling predictions, Cohen and DeLong make a particularly pessimistic claim: "The gold standard for rapid growth and shared prosperity"—the few decades following World War II—was "probably an aberration, a confluence of events ... unlikely to be seen again."

These guys know their economic history, and they may be right, but I fear that they're glossing over a recent period that was both unique and instructive. In the late 1990s fast growth was accompanied by very tight labor markets and broadly shared prosperity. Productivity accelerated, unemployment fell to its lowest rate in thirty years—four percent in 2000—and, much as it did in the "golden era," full employment ensured

that the benefits of faster growth were broadly shared.

What's more, two important factors were different in the 1990s. First, union power was much less significant than in the 1950s and 1960s, and second, our work force was far more exposed to global competition than it had been in the post-war period. In fact, trade (imports plus exports) as a share of the economy was 26 percent in 2000—the highest on record. Both these factors pushed hard against the impressive distributional results of the late 1990s, yet there's no denying that those results occurred.

Is there a lesson from this period that can be applied to the impending challenges identified by Cohen and DeLong? The strong demand of the 1990s was itself partially an aberration, caused by bubbles in key markets. But that conflates the source of demand (speculation) with its impact (for example, strong labor demand and income growth, tame inflation). The important point is that contrary to previous economic dogma, we can run a truly full-employment economy without overheating. In fact, it is a necessary condition for better distributional outcomes.

Can we reach full employment in a world with so much global competition? Won't it take that much more labor demand to absorb the trade-induced increase in labor supply? Cohen and DeLong argue that regardless of trade flows, the Federal Reserve sets the unemployment rate. In that regard the fact that Greenspan and Co. are currently raising interest rates with unemployment in the mid-fives doesn't bode well. On the other hand, Cohen and DeLong argue that greater openness will lead to faster growth, and that, too, could help to lower unemployment. But Samuelson's recent work on the unique challenges of offshoring skilled services raises some doubts about the conventional wisdom that greater openness always boosts growth.

The bottom line is that although we probably can't count on getting back to truly full employment in the near term, it's none too soon to start thinking about the necessary policy tools to get us there. In the context of Cohen and DeLong's compelling arguments, think of full

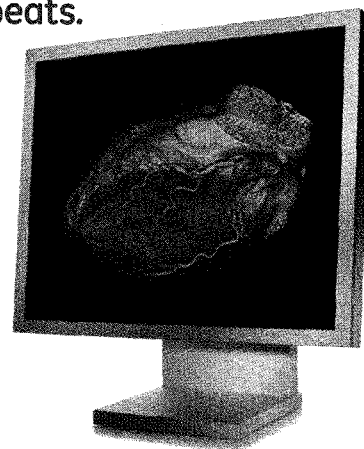
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employment as a critical offset to some of the economic insecurities caused by globalization.

A related point takes off from their brief discussion of steps we should take to ameliorate the problems they elaborate. They advocate "investments in retraining and rebuilding," "far more career-transition assistance," and "perhaps more government funding" for health care. Good ideas, all—but let's lose the "perhaps" and specify a truly comprehensive safety net for workers displaced by these trends.

Second, as the authors astutely stress, a much bigger problem than actual job losses is the downward pressure on white-collar wages. This calls for a far more ambitious policy response: direct investment in the creation of high-quality jobs, a particularly straightforward way for winners to compensate losers. It might take the form of R&D in high-end industries such as medical research and information technology, which has the added benefit of potentially opening up new areas of comparative advantage.

The theme is to spend at least some of the gains from trade on both ameliorating the dislocations it engenders and directly investing in quality jobs for affected workers.

*Jared Bernstein
Economic Policy Institute
Washington, D.C.*

I'm standing on the diving board, trying to jump headfirst into William Powers's optimistic take on the niching of the media and the attendant polarization of their audience ("The Massless Media," January/February *Atlantic*). Unfortunately, I take issue with his assumption that partisan broadcast media have the same intellectual moorings as print. It's mostly an issue of mindful partisanship versus mindless partisanship. The partisanship of the media in the 1800s was a free-for-all of political opinion—or so I'd like to think—in which every passionate reader put in the mental effort to read and weigh the thoughts expressed. But the engagement levels for TV-watching... well, we do put thought into our *American Idol* votes.

Today 80 percent of Fox News viewers—and lesser majorities of other TV

viewers—believe one of three untruths about the Iraq War, as opposed to a minority of (ahem) print consumers. So it's not a question of partisan outlets' making the debate more vigorous; it's actually the opposite—TV thrusting at us vigorous, opinionated voices who (theoretically) have done the deep thinking themselves.

*Matthew T. Felling
Center for Media and Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.*

Will Iran Be Next?

James Fallows's article "Will Iran Be Next?" (December *Atlantic*) usefully discusses the dangers involved in attacking Iran's nuclear program. Fallows also points out that an air strike against Iranian nuclear facilities would be less likely to succeed than the 1981 Israeli attack against the Iraqi Osirak reactor, because of the likely concealment and dispersion of Iranian nuclear facilities.

I agree with Fallows that Iran is likely to have concealed and dispersed its facilities, and that such countermeasures substantially complicate military plans. However, the success of the 1981 Israeli attack in delaying the Iraqi nuclear-weapons program has been greatly exaggerated. The French-supplied reactor at Osirak was not well designed for plutonium production, the pre-attack Iraqi route to building a nuclear weapon. Further, by 1981 the French had decided to supply the Iraqis with a special nuclear fuel that could be used to run the reactor but was not well suited for plutonium production.

More important, a rigorous inspection regime was in place to ensure that plutonium could not be produced and secretly diverted to a weapons program. The International Atomic Energy Agency was in the process of installing an extensive inspection regime that would probably have included twenty-four-hour camera surveillance and frequent on-site visits from IAEA inspectors (the reactor was not yet operative at the time of the attack). The French themselves had technicians on hand who filed frequent reports. France opposed Iraq's acquiring nuclear weapons, and would have suspended the supply of reactor fuel if

evidence of plutonium production had been uncovered. The diversion of plutonium would have been difficult to conceal, given that it would have involved a number of non-routine activities, including possibly shutting down the reactor. Imad Khadduri, a former scientist in the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission under Saddam Hussein, bluntly declares in his recent memoir that the idea that plutonium could be produced under this inspection regime without tipping off IAEA inspectors or French technicians is "delusional."

Rather than delaying the Iraqi nuclear-weapons program, the 1981 attack may actually have accelerated it. The attack appears to have heightened Saddam's interest in acquiring nuclear weapons. After the attack Saddam started an underground nuclear-weapons program, unbeknownst to the international community and hence free from the fetters of IAEA inspection.

Given that Osirak is supposed to be the prototypical success story of preventive attacks against a rogue state's nuclear program, this episode should give considerable pause to advocates of future preventive strikes.

*Dan Reiter
Atlanta, Ga.*

I was surprised that one option was not even mentioned, let alone discussed, in James Fallows's interesting article. That option is the nuclear deterrent strategy that was highly effective against the Soviet Union—once seen as an implacable enemy, an "evil empire."

The United States, with its overwhelming nuclear superiority, could make it known to Iran (and North Korea) that any use of nuclear weapons by Iran—whether against the United States or against any U.S. interest, including Israel, Turkey, Afghanistan, or Saudi Arabia—would be met with a nuclear response so overwhelming that it would effectively destroy Iran as a functioning society. Iran could not doubt America's capability in that regard, and though some question might remain about America's willingness to let the nuclear monster loose, the Iranians might find the idea credible with George Bush as president. In any

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event, the mere possibility of wholesale destruction as a consequence of using a nuclear weapon must surely give pause even to a madman. The historical record seems to show that it does.

This idea does not address the very real possibility that Iran could act indirectly, as suggested in the article, helping al-Qaeda or Hizbollah or some other terrorist group to stage a nuclear attack. Once again, however, the Bush policy of "either you're with us or you're against us" could make clear that the faintest hint of cooperation with a terrorist nuclear attack would also result in wholesale retaliation. The Iranians might then hesitate to provide such support, and might even attempt to police their terrorist friends for fear that Iran could be implicated in any terrorist nuclear attack.

*Arthur Z. Moss
Wilmington, Del.*

James Fallows neglects two points that considerably affect his thesis.

First, the Osirak reactor that was bombed by Israel in June of 1981 was explicitly designed by the French engineer Yves Girard to be unsuitable for making bombs. That was obvious to me on my 1982 visit. Many physicists and nuclear engineers have agreed. Much evidence suggests that the bombing did not delay the Iraqi nuclear-weapons program but started it. For example, the principal Iraqi scientist, Jafar Dhia Jafar, was asked by Saddam Hussein to work on the bomb only in July of 1981.

Second, Fallows fails to recognize that Iran is now in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, after having failed to provide details of the uranium-enrichment program when it should have. The protocol Iran has declined to sign is an *additional* protocol that is not a part of the treaty itself. More important, the principal proponent of the treaty, the United States, has been in violation of the treaty almost continuously since its inception. The United States is continuing to develop new types of nuclear weapons and failing to disarm to the extent most scientists believe is desirable. The United States has refused to sign the test-ban treaty. The United States is also violating Title VI by failing to help non-weapons states use nuclear

energy for peaceful purposes, such as electricity production.

James Fallows and the U.S. State Department may not understand these matters, but any non-nuclear state that feels threatened by a neighbor or by the United States certainly does. Rhetoric about failing to follow the NPT is rightly perceived as insulting. If we wish to dissuade Iran from making nuclear weapons, then we must somehow find a peaceful way to persuade the Iranians that not making such weapons is in their interest and not merely in ours. We must recognize their sovereign rights and their legitimate pride. The threat of bombing is not enough, and is probably counterproductive.

*Richard Wilson
Mallinckrodt Research Professor of Physics
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.*

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I was troubled by one element of James Fallows's report. In the war game the mock CENTCOM commander, Sam Gardiner, stated, "We have no intention of getting bogged down in stability operations in Iran afterwards. Go in quickly, change the regime, find a replacement, and get out quickly after having destroyed—rendered inoperative—the nuclear facilities." In response Fallows rightly asks, "How could the military dare suggest such a plan, after the disastrous consequences of ignoring stability responsibilities in Iraq? Even now, Gardiner said after the war game, the military sees post-conflict operations as peripheral to its duties. If these jobs need to be done, someone else must take responsibility for them."

War games allow us to learn important lessons by anticipating the future. But it's a lot easier to learn lessons from the proven past.

During a recent visit to Iraq I asked one general to explain his job. He responded, "My job is to provide security. But security has many pieces: nation-building, democratizing, infrastructure development." When I asked him how he prepared for this use of "soft power," he said, "I've been trained as a warrior, not a nation builder."

The lack of post-conflict preparation

undermined us in Iraq and, if repeated, will undermine us elsewhere. The Pentagon needs to move past its twentieth-century myopia on strategic, tactical, and policy consequences.

Even some who argue passionately about a "military transformation" can't break out of the twentieth-century mindset. They limit their transformational views to hardware: machines, technologies, weapons that are faster, lighter, more lethal. But Iraq proves that we also need a cognitive transformation: understanding the cultures we're fighting in, speaking foreign languages, developing better human-intelligence capabilities. To accomplish that transformation we must do three things.

First, reform professional military education to give our soldiers a deeper investment in post-conflict operations, counterinsurgency, military history, foreign cultures, languages, psychology, civil affairs, policing, and more.

Second, remove the obstacles to military careers in civil affairs, psychological operations, and foreign area studies.

Third, invest more money in the underfunded and undervalued military agencies that understand how our enemies are exploiting the convergence of demographics, governance, disease, disconnectedness, tyranny, and religious fundamentalism.

That general in Iraq was right. Security has many pieces. And like it or not, the military will be called on to pick up the pieces after force is exerted. It shouldn't take a war game to teach that lesson. And the lesson we learned in Iraq was not new. We should have learned it from World War II.

*Representative Steve Israel (D-N.Y.)
Washington, D.C.*

James Fallows replies:

I appreciate Dan Reiter's elaboration on the circumstances of the Osirak raid in 1981. It underscores a point made by the participants in our exercise. Everyone agrees that the conditions for launching a successful pre-emptive strike were more favorable when Israel did it a quarter century ago in Iraq than they could be now for the United States in Iran. The targeted nuclear program was more primitive. The distance for attackers to travel was shorter.

The colonial me *was* *born on distant shores.*

She set sail for a better life in a new land.

*There, a man rich in means, but starved in
romance, courted her with poetry and dance,*

lavished her with fine goods

and European fashion.

They married and had many children.

Apparently,

fear of commitment had yet to be invented.

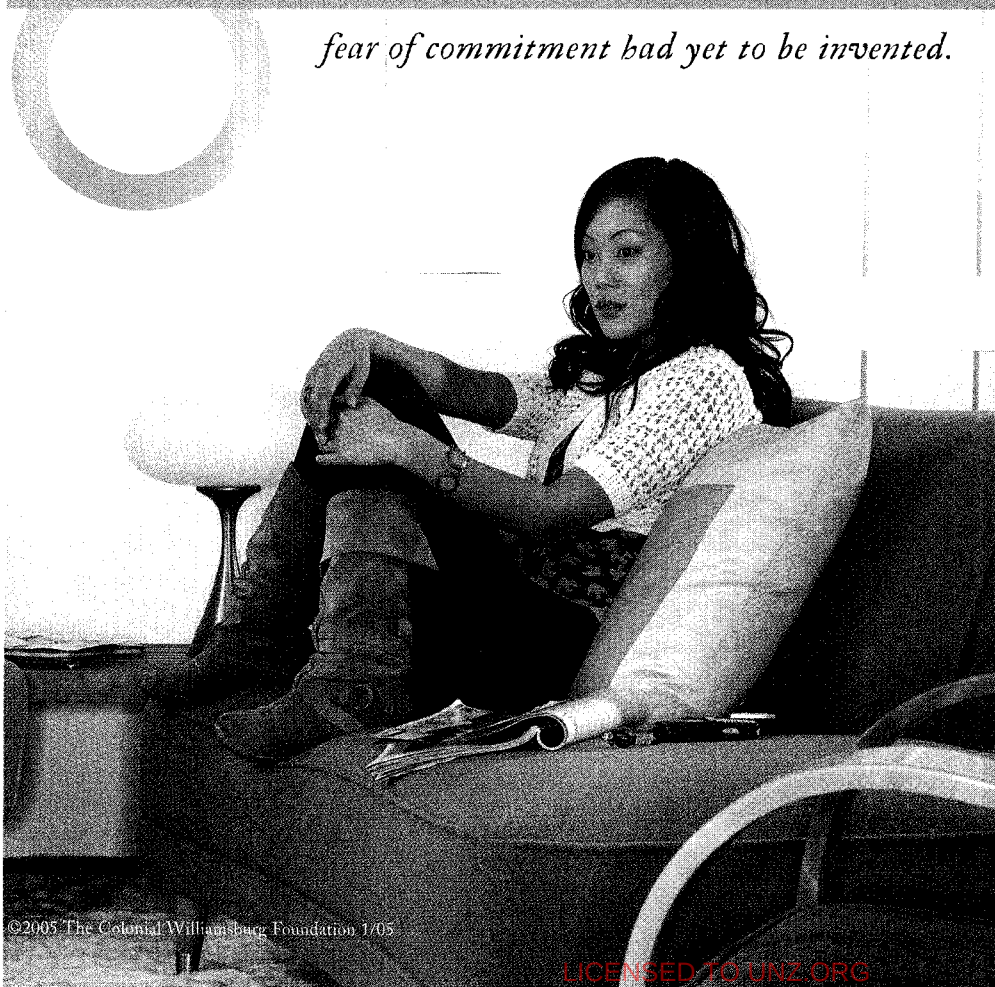


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The element of surprise was greater. There were fewer facilities to strike. And if, even with these advantages, the Osirak raid was of questionable value in slowing Iraq's nuclear program, the prospects for an effective strike against Iran look all the worse.

The question posed to our panel was whether the United States had a realistic way of forcing Iran to give up its nuclear programs. Within the obvious limits of our exercise the answer was no. A pre-emptive air strike would probably be ineffective, and a full-scale land invasion would be harder than what America has undertaken in Iraq, especially for an American military that already has too much on its hands. Therefore our panelists concluded that the United States had only two realistic alternatives: using diplomatic and economic pressure to persuade Iran to change course, or finding ways to live with a nuclear-armed Iran (as we now live with nuclear-armed Pakistan and India). A strategy of deterrence, like the one Arthur Moss lays out, would be an important part of the latter option—if the former fails.

Richard Wilson may not have grasped the premise of the article. It was based on a hypothetical future showdown between Iran and the United States; it was not an exact report on current events. (A number of Arab press reports were based on a similar misunderstanding. They discussed our article as if it were a real, investigative account of real deliberations about real plans for attack.) Nonetheless, the conclusions our panel reached are very similar to those Wilson states in the final paragraph of his letter.

I agree with Representative Israel's observations about the modern responsibilities of the American military. For the purposes of our exercise we assumed that the (mock) commander of Central Command, Sam Gardiner, had been asked by the (mock) president to provide "military options" for dealing with Iran. This happens all the time in real life. As a way of deciding whether a certain course of action is even worth considering, a president may ask to see what the costs and consequences of the approach would be. In his role as commander of CENTCOM, Gardiner assumed that the president would not be satisfied with an answer that called for 400,000 troops and a five-year occupation and would want to see a more "manageable"

option. This is the one he presented—and one the panelists opposed from the start, for reasons similar to those Israel outlines. For different reasons, it seems likely that real-world panelists would also reject plans calling for a much larger invasion force.

In the original article Sam Gardiner explained why he placed a high value on war games. His experience at the National War College and elsewhere had shown him that one such exercise, with all its constraints and artificiality, provoked as much useful thought as a large number of lectures or ordinary classroom discussions. In reaction to our article we have seen responses concerning many of the themes raised by the panel: for instance, articles in Armenia and Azerbaijan about whether the United States would or should develop bases there to support an invasion, and discussion in many countries about the leverage Iran might exert in Iraq if it felt an invasion was near. It was in order to stimulate such consideration of America's choices in Iran that we published the article.

Among the Hostage-Takers

I found Mark Bowden's article "Among the Hostage-Takers" (December *Atlantic*) an enlightening look at modern-day Iran. To make one correction, however, the provisional government would have been interested in negotiating for spare parts for F-14 Tomcats, not F-16 Falcons. The F-16, which would later be widely exported to (and often manufactured by) U.S. allies throughout the world, is a more modern airplane of a different type. The F-14 was then the U.S. Navy's premier interceptor, optimized for multiple over-water intercepts in places like the Arabian Gulf. It was a strategic asset at the time, critical for a potential hot war during the Cold War, and was exported to no other country but our staunch ally pre-revolutionary Iran. Only the United States could provide the necessary parts and maintenance to keep this immensely expensive asset in the air. It was a significant U.S. bargaining chip. A healthy F-14 fleet might have made the difference in the unsuccessful bloodbath with Saddam Hussein.

*Jon A. Skinner
Eagle River, Alaska*

The joke apparently is on Mark Bowden. The thumbs-up sign is not the same in Iranian culture as in our culture. It is equivalent to showing our middle finger—not quite the meaning the author believed.

*Parvin Baharloo
Seattle, Wash.*

Mark Bowden replies:

Parvin Baharloo may be correct about the traditional significance of a thumbs-up gesture in Iran, although I don't know for sure. But there is no doubt whatsoever that the Revolutionary Guard who made the gesture to me as he said "Okay, George W. Bush!" was not conveying an insult. I had been talking to him and his companion for hours, and their sympathies were clear.

Advice & Consent

In her letter to the editor in the December *Atlantic*, Carol de Lama-drid writes, "George W. Bush's success as governor of Texas, and his reputation as a 'uniter,' were due to the vast experience and political skill of his lieutenant governor, Bill Hobby, a Democrat and a legend in Texas."

I suspect that she meant to credit Bob Bullock, who served two terms as lieutenant governor from 1991 to 1999.

Bill Hobby served as lieutenant governor from 1973 to 1991; George W. Bush was elected governor in 1994.

*Joe Bowbeer
Seattle, Wash.*

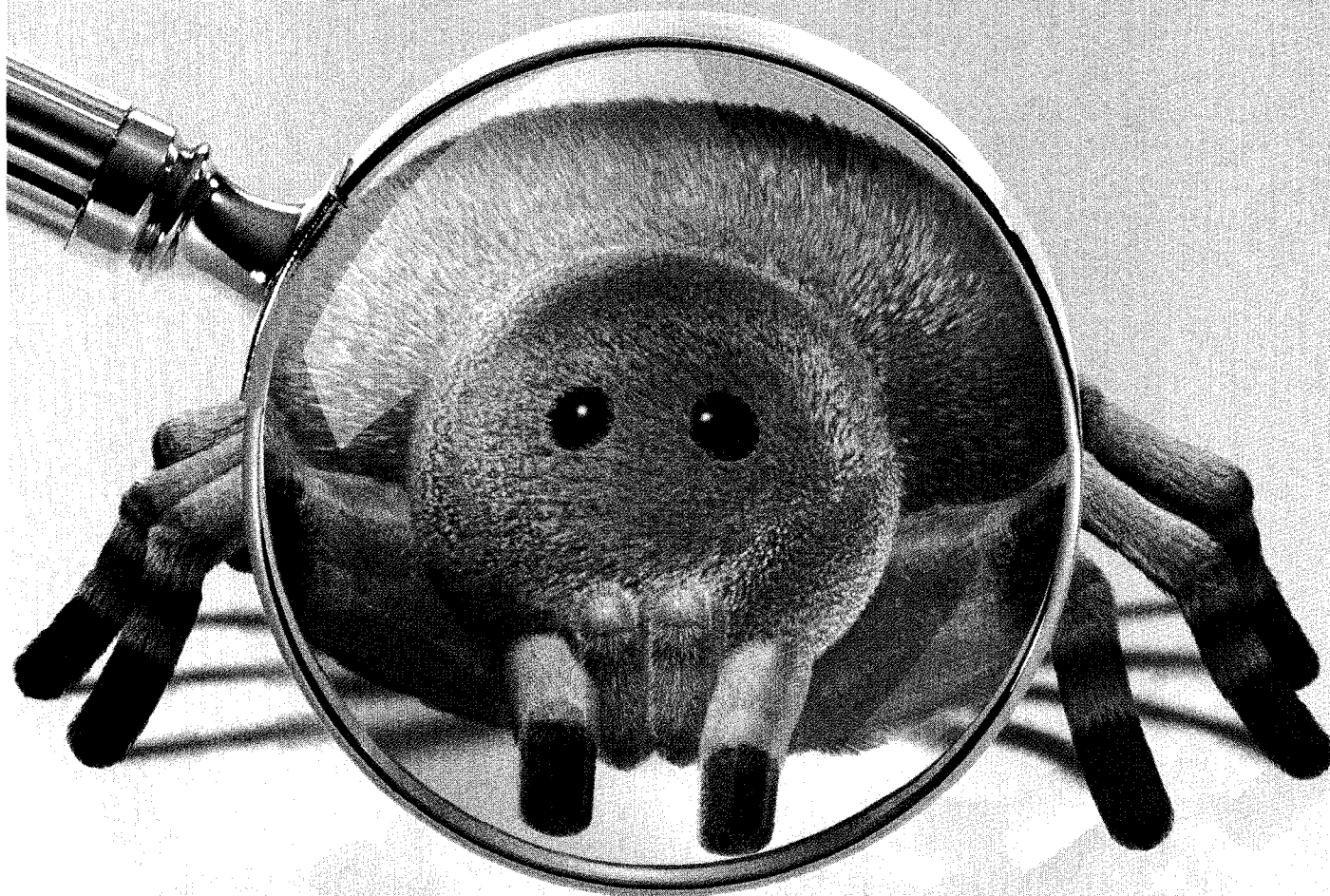
I have one serious problem with Bruce McCall's "Nobel Prize Claim Form" (December *Atlantic*): no Nobel Prize is awarded in mathematics. The closest analogue to a Nobel Prize in Mathematics is the Fields Medal, which is awarded every four years and includes a cash prize of \$15,000 Canadian.

*Michael J. Walsh
Somerset, Mass.*

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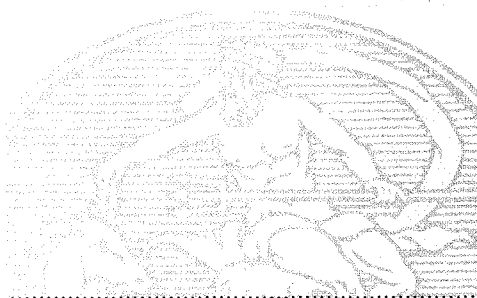
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THE AGENDA

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COMMENT

American Casino

The promise and perils of Bush's "ownership society"

BY ROBERT J. SHILLER

When they arrived in the New World, in 1620, the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony tried communal ownership of the land. It didn't work: crops were not well cared for and the result was a severe food shortage. So in 1623 each family was given a private plot of land along with responsibility for maintaining it. This worked much better. As William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth Colony, recounted in *Of Plymouth Plantation*, people worked harder when they had private plots, and the crop yield was much higher. The moral of this story—at least according to the proponents of private ownership who like to quote from it—is simple: people take better care of things they own individually than of things they hold in common.

The many advantages of private ownership have been recognized for millennia (Aristotle described some of them) and are supported by modern social science. For instance, a 1999 study published in the *Journal of Urban Economics* found that even after income, marital status, and education level are controlled for, people who own their own homes are more likely than those who don't to be good citizens (as gauged by membership in nonprofessional organizations, knowledge of local politics, voting in elections, and attempts to solve local problems). Basic economic theory holds that encouraging more people to own things—whether land, homes, or equity shares in private companies—produces better economic incentives, increased motivation to work creatively, a deeper sense of citizenship, and a stronger society.

Herein lies the philosophy behind George W. Bush's proposed "ownership society." Over the past few years President Bush has proposed to let people "own" their Social Security contributions, in the form of personal retirement accounts; "own" their health care, through portable health savings accounts; and own their homes in greater numbers, through bigger housing subsidies. Individually, each of these plans has something to recommend it; collectively, they could encourage saving (a worthy economic goal) and provide people with more choices (a worthy political one).

It's easy to forget, however, that such plans as those Bush proposes don't just encourage personal ownership—they also increase personal risk. And the Bush administration has chosen a particularly infelicitous moment to be piling additional financial risk onto individual citizens—

because economic life in America is already becoming inherently riskier.

How so? For one thing, the job market is growing increasingly volatile. The information revolution is constantly accelerating, leading to rapid changes in business practices. (Globalization is one major consequence of the information revolution; the replacement of human beings by machines is another.) The speed of economic transformation means that career trajectories are less predictable than they used to be, while swings in fortune over the course of one's working life are greater. At the same time, technology seems to be contributing to an economic winner-take-all effect, in which a tiny fraction of the population earns most of the money—and a large fraction doesn't earn very much at all.

It's not just career trajectories that have become more unpredictable. Over the past decade or so American stocks, commodities, and housing markets have also become generally more volatile. The surge in the stock market from 1995 to 2000 marked the biggest five-year percentage increase since the rebound from the Crash of 1929. And over the past five years the average price

The administration has chosen a particularly infelicitous moment to pile additional financial risk onto individual citizens.

of single-family homes has risen more in percentage terms than it has over any comparable period since the late 1940s, when veterans returning from World War II fueled a boom. The greater volatility over much of the past decade reflects Americans' growing appetite for speculative investments: stimulated by widespread financial reporting, many Americans worry more than they did before the recent booms about missing out on the opportunity to profit from rising markets; they jump in and out of the stock market with much greater abandon than before. For the foreseeable future this will continue to produce big, sudden swings in the prices of stocks, and perhaps of houses.

It is human nature to make assump-

tions about the future based on extrapolations from the past. Many homeowners, for example, have become so sure of continuing high returns that they've stopped saving entirely, and have started borrowing against recent home-value appreciation. (Personal saving rates have declined precipitously in recent years, and are now near zero nationwide.) In this climate of seemingly ever rising returns it is no wonder that enthusiasm for an ownership society has taken hold.

On the one hand, the Bush administration is smart to use government policy to encourage saving and investing. But on the other hand, the ownership society is likely to be a failure if it leaves individual Americans naked against risk.

What to do? First, we must remember that *insurance* is as crucial a concept as *ownership*. Insurance is hardly anti-capitalist; rather, it's integral to capitalism's smooth functioning, a device to mitigate the random fortune and "creative destruction" that might otherwise make a purely capitalist society unbearable. Consider Social Security. It was originally devised as an insurance scheme to protect people against the ups and downs of life, to alleviate poverty among children and the elderly. People differ in their ability to take care of

the dependent generations; some are irresponsible or impoverished, or die before they have finished fulfilling their parental or filial responsibilities. Social Security was meant in part to take on some of the family's traditional function. In effect, Social Security transfers some risk from the family to the nation. Replacing much of Social Security with a system of individual accounts would be an abrogation of one of our most fundamental social covenants.

Many people have evidently concluded that by winning re-election, President Bush has won a mandate to create an ownership society, just as President Franklin D. Roosevelt did to create the New Deal in 1932 (when both the stock market and the wider economy

were tanking). But Bush should be careful. If we get the ownership society wrong, growing inequality and social unrest are likely to follow. An ownership society should build on the social-insurance system we already have, not replace it.

For instance, in April the United Kingdom will begin making every one of its newborns a capitalist from birth, by setting up a personal trust fund of about \$500 or more. Relatives are encouraged to add to the trust fund, which accumulates tax-free. Here in America the economists Shlomo Benartzi and Richard Thaler have constructed a "Save More Tomorrow" plan, based on the premise that people understand they should be saving more, but are bound by habit and often procrastinate. Under the plan participating employers merely ask their employees if they would like to commit to automatically saving a fraction of future pay increases, through payroll deduction. The first company to try the scheme found that nearly 80 percent of employees signed up, and retirement saving rates quadrupled within forty months. Both plans are attractive, because they actually increase saving, rather than merely encouraging a shift of existing savings toward risky investments. The second plan would cost the government nothing.

Americans, of course, are a famously sanguine people, and this is mostly a good thing. It accounts for our entrepreneurial spirit and for much of our economy's growth over the decades. But too much optimism can be dangerous: among other things, it can blind us to the risks of unalloyed exposure to markets, and make us entirely too willing to forswear insurance in pursuit of larger returns. The constellation of factors now in place—increased volatility in the job, housing, and stock markets; growing blindness to the risks of investing; and the administration's intention to expose more Americans to market risk through its ownership-society proposals—threatens to transform the United States into a nation of gamblers. And as anyone who has visited a casino knows, most gamblers lose. ▀

Robert J. Shiller is a professor of economics at Yale University. The second edition of his book Irrational Exuberance will be published in April.

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What "W" Owes to "WW"

President Bush may not even know it, but he can trace his view of the world to Woodrow Wilson, who defined a diplomatic destiny for America that we can't escape

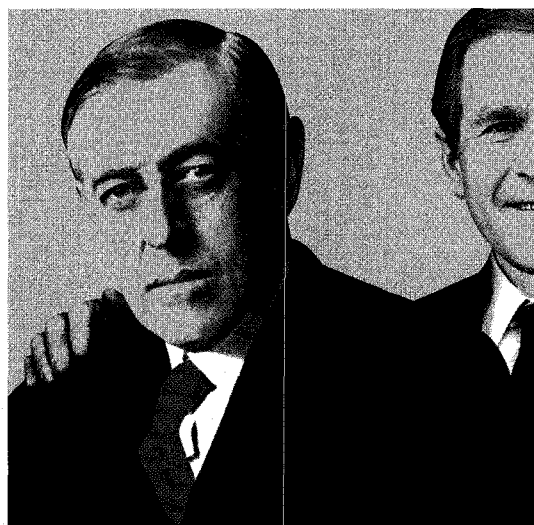
BY DAVID M. KENNEDY

George W. Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy proclaimed a new American right to wage preventive war. Following the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, Bush declared, it was simply too risky *not* to act pre-emptively. Whatever the merits, this doctrine is a radical departure for American diplomacy. At Concord Bridge, Fort Sumter, and Pearl Harbor it was America's adversaries who fired the first shot.

Many critics have berated Bush, accusing him of jettisoning two centuries of tradition and abandoning the high ground from which Americans have historically waged war with stouthearted moral confidence. But although this criticism is valid in many ways, Bush's approach also reaffirms what may well be America's only consistent tradition in foreign policy.

"These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society," the National Security Strategy declares. It dedicates the United States to the task of bringing "the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade" to "every corner of the world." Those idealistic—some would say hubristic—words uncannily echo Woodrow Wilson's heady rationale for American participation in World War I. Wilson would recognize George W. Bush as his natural successor, and he would recognize today's Americans as the direct spiritual descendants of the people he so reluctantly led into that conflict. For Wilson did not think that what came to be known, and often derided, as "Wilsonianism" was just a policy selected from a palette of possible choices. Rather, he saw it as the sole approach to international relations that his countrymen would embrace as consistent with their past and their principles. Wilson did not so much invent American foreign policy as discover it.

As in 2004, the world a century ago was reaching the end of a long peace. The structures that had allowed Europe to avoid war for much of the nineteenth century were visibly crumbling. Everywhere nations jockeyed for advantage and eyed their neighbors nervously. In the closing years of the nineteenth century Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium colonized enormous chunks of Southeast Asia and virtually all of Africa. Japan annexed Okinawa in 1879, Taiwan in 1895, and Korea in 1910. Even the United States, though born in a war



against empire, became an imperial power at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, in 1898.

The war against Spain announced America's debut on the stage of world affairs. The United States had grown to maturity in a uniquely isolated and secure environment. Shielded by two oceans, with no powerful neighbors to fear, it had been undistractedly absorbed for more than a century in the great project of consolidating its own continental domain. Those peculiar historical circumstances had bred stubborn habits of mind, including the

cherished belief that the United States could *choose* whether, when, and how to participate in the world.

That America now wielded immense potential power was indisputable. But by what principles should it be guided? As President Wilson asked in a Fourth of July address in 1914, "What are we going to do with the influence and power of this great nation? Are we going to play the old role of using that power for our aggrandizement and material benefit only?" Just six days earlier, in the faraway Balkan city of Sarajevo, two rounds from an assassin's pistol had felled Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie. Those shots set in motion a train of events that would urgently compel Wilson and his countrymen to come up with an answer.

The *Chicago Herald* demonstrated the stubborn vigor of the old-time isolationist religion in 1914, when it greeted the outbreak of the Euro-

pean war with "a hearty vote of thanks to Columbus for having discovered America." Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, believed that the opportunities and threats of the new century, as dramatically exposed by the outbreak of war, required a fundamental transformation in American foreign policy. Once the mantle of great-power status had been conferred on a nation, Roosevelt believed, it could not be doffed. The United

States must now jettison its isolationist heritage, embrace its role as a great power, and behave in the only way such a power could—by unapologetically seeking what Wilson had deprecated as its own "aggrandizement and material benefit." It should identify its interests and acquire the means to protect them as necessary and enlarge them as feasible. It should gird itself for action in the seething international arena, where competition among states was intense and interminable, quarter was neither asked nor given, and power alone was the currency of all transactions. These

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RATHER'S FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS

When Dan Rather gives up the CBS News anchor's chair this month, viewers will have to say good-bye to the bizarre colloquialisms that have peppered his broadcasts. A selection:

"Well, we've said it many times—if a frog had side pockets, he'd carry a handgun."

"Are your fingernails beginning to sweat?"

"Let's hit these biscuits with a dab of gravy."

"I know that you'd rather walk through a furnace in a gasoline suit than consider the possibility that John Kerry would lose Ohio."

"This [race] is as tight as the rusted lug nuts on a '55 Ford."

"... it's Spandex tight."

"... closer than Lassie and Timmy."

"... shakier than cafeteria Jell-O."

"This race is as hot and tight as a too-small bathing suit on a too-long car ride home from the beach."

"Frankly, we don't know whether to run, to watch, or to bark at the moon."

"Turn the lights down—the party just got wilder."

"He swept through the South like a tornado through a trailer park."

"No question now that Kerry's rapidly reaching the point where he's got his back to the wall, his shirttails on fire, and the bill collectors at the door."

"His chances are slim right now, and if he doesn't carry Florida, slim will have left town."

"Sip it, savor it, cup it, photostat it, underline it in red, put it in an album, hang it on the wall: George Bush is the next president of the United States."

"When the going gets weird, anchormen punt."

were, of course, the timeless precepts of diplomatic realism, or *realpolitik*.

Woodrow Wilson instinctively reacted to the onset of the Great War by issuing a proclamation of neutrality. But as the conflict grew in scale and duration, wreaking devastation previously unimaginable, he became increasingly convinced that isolation was no longer a viable posture for the United States. Yet Wilson also felt (along with many other Americans) that Theodore Roosevelt's philosophy, with its embrace of raw power and cold national interest, was irrelevant, even alien. If neither traditional isolationism nor conventional *realpolitik* would do, then it fell to Wilson to craft an authentically American foreign policy that would so resonate in the hearts of his countrymen as to provide a sustainable basis for American international engagement.

Two assumptions underlay Wilson's thinking: that the circumstances of the modern era were utterly novel, and that providence had entrusted America with a mandate to carry out a singular mission in the world. In Wilson's view, the Great War had so conclusively demonstrated the monstrously destructive capacities of modern industrialized states that it had sundered the very fabric of history. The advent of mass democracy, meanwhile, had made modern governments inescapably beholden to their electorates. Avoiding war thus became diplomacy's supreme objective, and attending to public opinion became an indispensable element of statecraft. Wilson therefore concluded—like his great hero, Abraham Lincoln—that the dogmas of the diplomatic past were inadequate to the stormy present. The unprecedented dangers of the twentieth-century world required statesmen to disenthral themselves from inherited wisdom about international relations—to learn, in Lincoln's words, to think anew and act anew, and to recognize that government of the people necessarily meant involving the people in their government's diplomacy.

But Wilson also believed that America's history offered salvation to the world. Destiny, in his view, had thrust Americans into a role for which

their entire past had been but an elaborate rehearsal. Roosevelt had insisted that the United States must shed the delusions nurtured by its peculiar historical development and become a conventional great power. On the contrary, Wilson said, the peculiarities of their history had fashioned for Americans a lever with which they could move the world. The moment had now arrived for the United States to redeem on a global scale the full revolutionary promise of 1776—to create everywhere the *novus ordo saeculorum* ("new order of the ages") that the founding generation had so extravagantly predicted.

In the end, of course, Wilson failed to wean his country from its propensity to isolation. The Senate rejected the Versailles Treaty and refused to take the United States into the League of Nations. The United States did not merely revert to isolationism in the years after World War I; it entered what was arguably the most isolationist phase of its history. It testily insisted that the Allied governments repay their wartime debts to the United States Treasury, even at the price of gravely disrupting international financial markets and capital flows. It deliberately stood aloof from the gathering crisis that became World War II.

It has long been customary to argue, as Henry Kissinger has done, that Woodrow Wilson failed "because the country was not yet ready for so global a role." There is much truth to that judgment. But in the longer term, when America finally acquired the necessary muscle, Wilsonianism unambiguously triumphed. This has been the central fact of international life since World War II, which conferred on America a power unmatched and unmatchable. Winston Churchill declared in 1945 that "the United States stand at this moment at the summit of the world"—and there the country has remained. In those circumstances America substantially succeeded in remaking the entire international order along Wilsonian lines. Even those carping Europeans embraced Wilson's ways in the end. As the historian Walter Russell Mead has written,

RED SOX REPEAT?

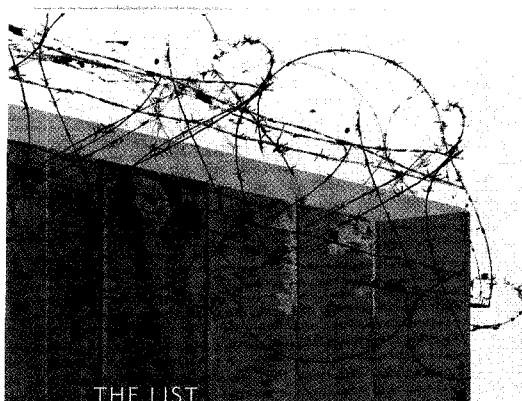
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THE LIST

SECURITY FENCES

This spring Israel is scheduled to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, but it plans to continue building a controversial 400-mile anti-terrorist barrier between itself and the West Bank. Though the International Court of Justice has ruled that the fence violates international law, it remains highly popular among Israelis—attacks have declined by as much as 90 percent in certain areas since construction began, two years ago. Similar security barriers have been constructed throughout history, from the Great Wall of China to the lesser-known wall between Israel and Gaza that was built in 1994. Today the West Bank barrier is just one of many partitions around the world aimed at repelling invaders—whether terrorists, guerrillas, or immigrants. Here are the sites of other notable security barriers, in chronological order of inception. —ABIGAIL CUTLER

1. North Korea/South Korea: Called “the scariest place on earth” by President Bill Clinton, this 151-mile-long demilitarized zone has separated the two Koreas since 1953 and is the most heavily fortified border in the world.

2. Belfast, Northern Ireland: Nicknamed the “Peace Line,” this series of brick, iron, and steel barriers was first erected in the 1970s to curb escalating violence between Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods. The barriers have more than doubled in number over the past decade, and currently stretch over thirteen miles of Northern Ireland.

3. Cyprus: A 112-mile-long construction of concrete, barbed wire, watchtowers, minefields, and ditches has separated the island’s Turks from its Greeks since 1974. The Turkish Cypriot government reduced restrictions on cross-border travel in April of 2003.

4. Morocco/Western Sahara: Known as “The Wall of Shame,” these ten-foot-high sand and stone barriers, some

mined, run for at least 1,500 miles through the Western Sahara. Built in the 1980s, they are intended to keep West Saharan guerrilla fighters out of Morocco.

5. India/Bangladesh: Aiming to curb infiltration from its neighbor, India in 1986 sanctioned what will ultimately be a 2,043-mile barbed-wire barrier. It’s expected to cost \$1 billion by the time it is completed, next year.

6. India/Pakistan: In 1989 India began erecting a fence to stem the flow of arms from Pakistan. So far it has installed more than 700 miles of fencing, much of which is electrified and stands in the disputed Kashmir region. The anti-terrorist barriers will eventually run the entire 1,800-mile border with Pakistan.

7. Kuwait/Iraq: The 120-mile demilitarized zone along this border has been manned by UN soldiers and observers since the Gulf War ended, in 1991. Made of electric fencing and wire, and supplemented by fifteen-foot-wide trenches, the barrier extends from Saudi Arabia to the Persian Gulf. Last year Kuwait decided to install an additional 135-mile iron partition.

8. United States/Mexico: In the mid-1990s President Clinton initiated two programs, Operation Gatekeeper and Operation Hold the Line, to crack down on illegal immigration from Mexico. They produced a system of high-tech barriers, including a fourteen-mile fence separating San Diego from Tijuana. All told, security barriers stretch along at least seventy miles of the border.

9. Botswana/Zimbabwe: The government of Botswana claims to have started building a ten-foot-high electric fence along its border with Zimbabwe to control the spread of foot-and-mouth disease. However, most Zimbabweans believe that the fence—begun in 2003 and intended to stretch up to 300 miles—really aims to stanch the immigration flow from troubled Zimbabwe into calmer Botswana.

10. Saudi Arabia/Yemen: In 2003 Saudi Arabia began building a ten-foot-high barrier along its border with Yemen to prevent terrorist infiltration (you read that correctly). Heeding Yemeni protests that the fence violated a border treaty, the Saudi government vowed last year to complete the project in cooperation with Yemen.

Wilson’s principles ... still guide European politics today: self-determination, democratic government, collective security, international law, and a league of nations ... France, Germany, Italy, and Britain may have sneered at Wilson, but every one of these powers today conducts its European policy along Wilsonian lines.

Even Kissinger, the arch-realist, concedes that “Wilson’s principles have remained the bedrock of American foreign-policy thinking.” Those principles informed Franklin Roosevelt’s Atlantic Charter in 1941. They shaped the array of multilateral institutions that the United States helped to create at the end of World War II, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations, which not only claims America as a member but maintains its headquarters in the nation’s principal city. They guided American policy during the long ideological contest with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. And they misguided the United States into the costly conflict in Vietnam.

Kissinger and Richard Nixon eventually ended the Vietnam War. But they did not dislodge Wilsonian idealism from the center of American foreign policy. Every American president since Wilson has embraced the core precepts of Wilsonianism. Nixon himself hung Wilson’s portrait in the White House Cabinet Room.

Wilson’s ideas continue to dominate American foreign policy in the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of 9/11 they have, if anything, taken on even greater vitality. Whether America and the world are the better for that Wilsonian ambition is a question whose definitive answer lies in the future. With prescient apprehension, Wilson himself acknowledged both the promise and the peril of the only diplomatic destiny that he thought possible for his country. “God helping her,” he said at the conclusion of his address asking Congress for a declaration of war, “she can do no other.” ▀

*David M. Kennedy teaches history at Stanford University. His most recent book, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945*, won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for history. This essay is adapted from his forthcoming book about the distinctiveness of the American national character.*

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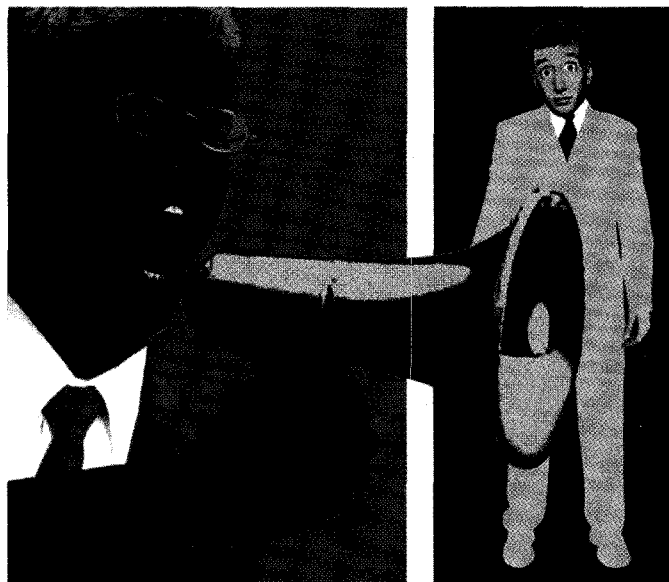
BY JOSHUA GREEN

As the second George W. Bush administration gets under way, holdovers from the first one seem to include not only a handful of cabinet secretaries but also the fierce divide that characterized American politics for much of Bush's first term. For evidence of both look no further than the political shout-fests on cable television: *Hardball*, *Crossfire*, *Hannity & Colmes*, and the reigning king, *The O'Reilly Factor*. Each features an endless procession of motormouths, the most successful of whom display their shaky grasp of current affairs with the belligerent energy of a loutish barfly. Yet the format has spread.

It's easy to assume that all this vitriol flows naturally from the contentious politics of a difficult time. But that isn't quite true. As more shows adopt an adversarial format, people who wish to appear on them must be equipped to survive the ordeal. (Any channel-flipper has surely seen Bill O'Reilly steamroll an overmatched guest.) The idea that someone would create a school to train aspirants in hand-to-hand political combat may sound farfetched—but not in Washington.

Rich Masters, forty-two, is the managing director of media relations at Qorvis Communications, a mid-sized public-relations firm in Washington, and a Jedi master to television pundits. Last year a Qorvis partner spotted an unmet demand—hardcore pundit training—and hired Masters to devise a cutting-edge program to fill it. Qorvis built a faux television studio in downtown Washington solely for this purpose, identical to the real thing in every detail, including decorative books and a rubber ficus.

Masters is an energetic, fast-talking Louisianan, a former television reporter and senatorial staffer who favors alligator-skin boots regardless of the occasion. He is also a player-coach, as rare in the political-talk-show world as in sports: in addition to training clients, he appears regularly on television himself. Were his métier football and not feuding, Masters would be said to prefer a "smash-mouth" style of play; a Democrat, he is a frequent and enthusiastic guest in the enemy territory of Fox News, and gives as good as he gets.



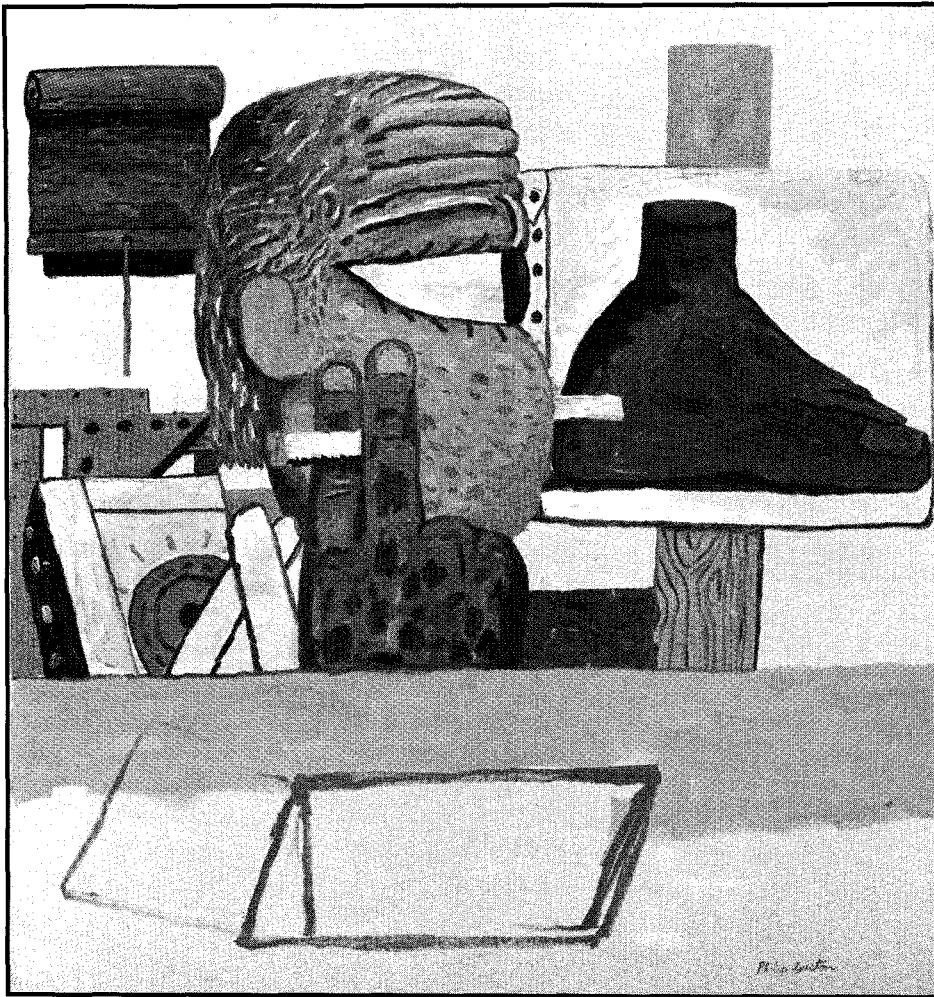
I first met Masters when we sat next to each other on a plane to New York for the Republican convention last summer. It wasn't long before he'd convinced me that pundit training had a bright future. "Even business shows and legal shows require CEOs, lawyers, and accountants to be just as skilled a debater as a political consultant or political-party leader," he pointed out. "Heck, any one of these days you're going to see Emeril hosting a debate on the Food Network over the merits of natural sugar versus a chemical substitute like Splenda." Before we'd landed I'd resolved to put myself in the hands of this master.

Until recently, media-training programs catered largely to a business clientele. With the stock-market boom and the proliferation in the 1990s of business-oriented cable networks like CNBC, the duties of the typical CEO grew to encompass more than just running the company; they now include representing it on television as well. Shrewd public-relations executives realized that hard-charging business leaders didn't always go over as well on television as they did in the boardroom. So as early as the 1960s an industry sprouted up to soften the rough edges—to train executives to speak in plain English rather than in business jargon, to hold their egos in check, and above all to smile and behave agreeably on camera.

The subsequent rise of political-debate shows, however, called for an entirely different skill set—one more or less the opposite of polite and agreeable. On *Hardball* and its like, egos run rampant, insider jargon predominates, and agreeability, if any can be detected, is strictly limited to commercial breaks.

Many people might think it unusual to seek professional help in order to spend time on television in the company of such bar-emptiers. But Washington is teeming with fixers, and even the most ignoble demands can usually be met for the right price. Occasionally this is problematic for the fixer. On the morning I had arranged for training, Masters appeared flustered and apologized for not being better prepared. Two days earlier the FBI had raided his office and confiscated his computer, he explained with a weary shake of the head—all part of the cost of doing business with another Qorvis client: the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Masters led me to a studio jammed with state-of-the-art equipment: cameras, teleprompters, video monitors, and sleek plasma-screen televisions on which to track and critique my perfor-



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THE ODDS

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT JAMES BOND?

Last fall the producers of the James Bond series decided it was time to revoke Pierce Brosnan's license to kill. The search began immediately for the next 007. With a new Bond film scheduled to begin shooting this year, SportsInterAction.com and other book-makers offered odds on who would fill the role formerly occupied by Sean Connery et al. Ewan McGregor was the favorite until an Internet rumor sparked fervent betting that Colin Salmon, Brosnan's costar in *Die Another Day*, would be cast as the first black Bond. Here are the latest odds on the next Bond. —JOHN SELLERS

13 to 4 Colin Salmon. Speculation arose when he signed a photo "007."

4 to 1 Ewan McGregor. The Scottish hunk's chances took a hit when he signed on to play Sky Masterson in a spring production of *Guys and Dolls* in London.

9 to 2 Christian Bale. Already cast as the next Batman. Could he handle a second billion-dollar movie franchise?

9 to 1 Colin Farrell. Farrell's louché portrayal of Alexander in Oliver Stone's 2004 biopic might hurt his chances.

11 to 1 Orlando Bloom. *Lord of the Rings* made him a bona fide action hero. Still, a twentysomething Bond?

11 to 1 Jude Law. Could be the best-looking Bond yet—but can he throw a punch?

21 to 1 Rupert Everett. Are the red states ready for Madonna's pal as the first gay Bond? Bettors say no.

29 to 1 Chow Yun Fat. An Asian Bond would sell a lot of tickets—but the global box office for Bond films is already out of this world.

41 to 1 Tom Cruise. The diminutive Scientologist might be tired of international intrigue—his *Mission: Impossible III* is also due for 2006 release.

501 to 1 Colin Powell. Recently said that Bond's famous gadgets are "interesting." A clue to his post-Bush plans?

mance. Qorvis gives its clients a choice of goals that, as best I can determine, range from politely assertive, for non-partisan reporters simply wishing to sneak a word in edgewise, to partisan jerk, for aspiring cable-TV mainstays. I opted for the full-blown-jerk treatment, and Masters seemed pleased.

We began with a video presentation titled "How to Feed the Media Beast Without Getting Eaten," which ticked through the basics. When answering a question, look directly into the camera, put your message in sound-bite format, and never pitch it above a seventh-grade level. (Also sit up straight: "Better breathing equals better sound bites.") To this Masters has brought his own innovation: the Message Diamond. "People think and process information in groups of three," he explained. "Larry, Curly, Moe. Beginning, middle, end. Anytime you answer a question, first hit your message, then enhance it with a story or an anecdote, then hit it again. Narrow, wide, narrow." He made a diamond with his fingers.

Not every question is a welcome one. A Republican must occasionally grapple with news that reflects well on Democrats and (more likely) vice versa. In such instances the cornered pundit must "find the gloomy lining." Masters counsels clients to either broaden the question or narrow it, depending on what suits their partisan purposes. Was Bush helped by strong job numbers this month? Then the broader issue is the continual outsourcing of American jobs. Are Hillary's favorability ratings on the rise? No problem: in red states she still ranks below avian flu.

The truly professional pundit understands that although the bickering and shouting may appear to be a free-flowing drama, television is rigidly segmented, most segments running about three minutes. This makes it possible, Masters explains, to "filibuster"—a technique he himself employs. "When you're up against an opponent and a question comes your way," he says, "start talking and keep talking. A lot of times inexperienced hosts don't know how to control the interview, and you literally run out the clock—you get to hit your message repeatedly and pre-

vent your opponent from getting hers out at all."

One of the fun things about Masters is that he shows clips of his own TV appearances to illustrate these techniques. We watched a snippet of him easily outmaneuvering one of the blonde replicants who host Fox News and launching into a disquisition on John Kerry. Masters's verbal dexterity called to mind the famous speed-talking Federal Express commercials of the 1980s, as he strung together diamond after diamond to draw out an impressive filibuster that left his opponent exasperated.

Often, of course, one is pitted against an equally capable foe and must break a filibuster. This, too, is an art form. "Don't scream," Masters warns. "You'll look nuts. Wait till they breathe and then pounce!" Masters believes that demeanor is crucial. He recommends interrupting in a funny way ("Whoa, hold the wagon, lady!") and shouting down an adversary only as a last resort. As long as you're not Al Gore, loud sighs and theatrically rolled eyes are good signals to the host that you'd like to butt in.

A more advanced maneuver includes strategically dispensing obsequious praise to co-opt an opponent—a kind of verbal jujitsu that thwarts a loaded question by exploiting an adversary's ego or rare streak of intellectual honesty. Masters played a Fox News clip in which he was pitted against the former Oklahoma governor Frank Keating, a noted conservative. The host asked, in the taunting way that Fox hosts do, whether Kerry's attacks on the Patriot Act didn't signify a general wimpiness among Democrats. Masters, realizing that Keating hailed from the libertarian strain of conservatives who look askance at government oversight, returned serve: "Well, Governor Keating has done some remarkable work on this subject, and I actually agree with him that the Patriot Act raises serious concerns." Point to Masters.

Part of the Qorvis experience includes a Madden-like play-by-play breakdown of one's prior talk-show appearances. (The company also provides "scouting reports" on the major



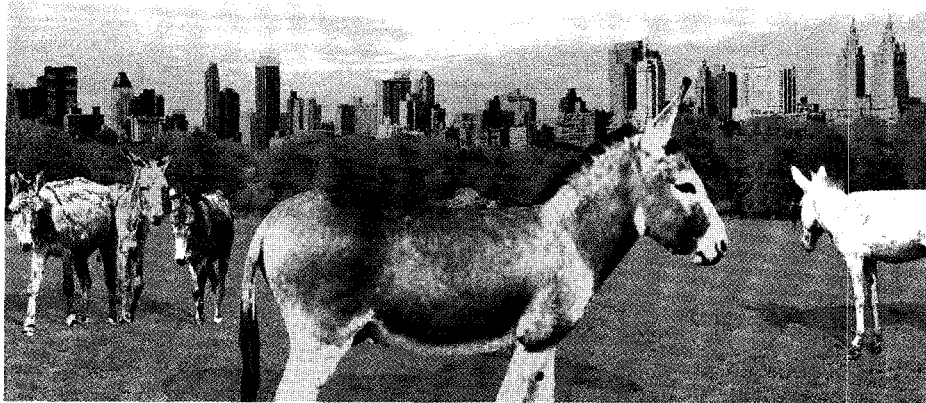
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The Power of Dreams



WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH CENTRAL PARK WEST?

BY WALTER SHAPIRO

"Thomas Frank, a left-wing journalist and author of the bestseller What's the Matter With Kansas?, ... argues that conservatives have been duping lower- and middle-class voters into voting Republican, when any moron can see that these people should vote their class interests—that is, vote Democrat. 'The preeminent issue of our day,' Frank writes, is 'people getting their interests wrong.'"—NATIONAL REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 9, 2004

The thirty-seven blocks of residential towers that line the western edge of Central Park, from its lower end at Columbus Circle to the age-old social barrier of Ninety-sixth Street, make up a self-contained world whose sprawling apartments, with their high-ceilinged living rooms, formal dining rooms, and unobtrusive maids' quarters, are home to investment bankers, corporate lawyers, and media executives. And yet in a baffling testament to the failure of Americans to grasp their economic self-interest, the residents of CPW (as locals colloquially call their street) overwhelmingly voted for John Kerry and the Democrats.

This shouldn't be! The very apartment names—the El Dorado, the San Remo, the Majestic, the Dakota—suggest the robber-baron ethos of an age when the Republicans William McKinley and Calvin Coolidge guaranteed low-tax prosperity. And the Bush tax cuts should have eased the burdens on these hard-pressed New Yorkers as they valiantly juggle co-op board assessments, Dalton tuitions, Telluride ski vacations, and East Hampton property taxes. Surely the well-heeled voters in these prestigious climes understand that they will benefit from the president's plan to transform Social Security into an income-transfer program for

Wall Street. (And Iraq? Parents along CPW have more reason to worry about wangling a table at Per Se, or getting on the right benefit committee, than about whether their son's National Guard unit will be dispatched overseas.)

Why, then, does Central Park West cling so stubbornly to irrational Democratic Party loyalties? The most plausible explanation is that the prickly voters of CPW feel that their traditional moral values (getting into Yale on merit, reading books other than the Bible, cherishing things from France) are not fully embraced by President Bush. Often it is the little things that rankle. Why does the administration refuse to promote tuition vouchers for students at Ethical Culture? How come the Bush daughters have not displayed the slightest bit of interest in working at *Vanity Fair*? How can Bush vacation in Crawford, Texas, which lacks both a major symphony orchestra and good Hunan delivery? CPW is an insular and hidebound neighborhood, brimming with cultural resentments unfathomable to outlanders. Failing to penetrate this region could place the Republicans in grave political danger—after all, as goes Central Park West, so go Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket (leaving the party with only the South, the heartland, and the Rocky Mountain West—along with control of the White House, Congress, and the courts). But it would take just a few gestures (an East Room gala honoring Wendy Wasserstein; a sturgeon, eggs, and bagel brunch on the White House lawn) to turn Central Park West into as reliable a Republican bastion as, say, Kansas.

Walter Shapiro has covered the past seven presidential campaigns for Esquire, USA Today, The Atlantic, and other publications. He is the author of One-Car Caravan, a chronicle of the 2004 Democratic primary race.

hosts.) Because the nettlesome FBI agents had carted off his computer, Masters told me, he was not able to pull my clips. Instead we adjourned to the studio for some role-playing exercises. Masters assumed the persona of a self-important talk-show host and began peppering me with questions. Though I considered myself battle-tested, he effortlessly picked apart my performance when we reviewed the tape. He gently explained that I had a "bobblehead problem"—that is, as the "host" delivered a question, I assumed a stern expression and nodded my head vigorously, aiming, I suppose, for an air of calm sagacity. But as he fast-forwarded through the replay to illustrate his point, I plainly looked idiotic, my head apparently fixed on a piston. I made a mental note to maintain rigid posture and a plastic smile in the future.

More troubling was that I committed a cardinal sin while attempting to maintain a filibuster: I ran out of things to say. This is a problem that plagues inexperienced pundits, but Masters has an easy solution: come up with a list of talking points and commit them to memory. "To train yourself," he went on, "be prepared to weave your points into any conversation. It's a fun thing to practice at cocktail parties." Also, I thought, deeply illuminating as to the stultifying conversation at most Washington parties. Masters was serious, though. "As a training exercise, make a bet with a colleague and see who can weave their talking points into the conversation without the rest of the guests' realizing it."

He sent me on my way with a suggestion concerning my pale complexion and the attendant need for makeup. True black belts, he advised, carry their own "base powder" in the event that a tardy arrival precludes a visit to the makeup artist, and he stressed that I should too. As we parted company, Masters encouraged me to wangle party invitations and put my new skills to work, which I intend to do—assuming, once my training secret is out, I still get any. ▀

Joshua Green is a senior editor of The Atlantic and a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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Primary Sources

Hizbollah's new toy; America's "Pedestrian Danger Index"; the perils of dialing drunk

NATIONAL SECURITY

Allah Is My Co-Pilot

In an incident that passed largely unnoticed in the American press, the Lebanese terrorist organization Hizbollah launched an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) late last year, according to a recent report by the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), in Oklahoma. The unmanned aircraft flew from Lebanon into Israel late on the morning of November 7, passed over the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, and then turned west and returned to Lebanese territory, landing in the Mediterranean Sea not far from shore. The UAV spent roughly half an hour in Israel's airspace, undetected by Israeli air force radar but noticed by local residents (the UAV's engine is reportedly "quite noisy"). The next day Hizbollah triumphantly released a grainy twenty-second video of the flight, claiming that the aircraft could fly "deep, deep" into Israel. MIPT estimates that the aircraft can carry a payload of up to eighty-eight pounds, making it an "attractive option" for launching a covert attack with chemical or biological weapons. Israeli sources claim that Hizbollah's UAV is an Iranian-made aircraft, one of eight such planes given to the terrorist group by Iran; Hizbollah, on the other hand, claims it developed the UAV entirely on its own. It may be telling

the truth: MIPT notes that "a small group of air model fans (or even someone alone) can build a capable UAV. All necessary equipment and parts are available in the open market at affordable prices."

—"Terrorists Develop Unmanned Aerial Vehicles," Eugene Miasnikov, National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism

Terror at 1,000 Feet

Could shoulder-fired missiles be the next terrorist weapon? In late October—just two weeks before press reports indicated that some 4,000 surface-to-air missiles had gone missing from Saddam Hussein's arsenal after the invasion of Iraq—the Congressional Research Service released a report assessing the threat such missiles pose to the U.S. airline industry. According to the study, some twenty-five to thirty terrorist and insurgent groups already have surface-to-air missiles, including groups in Turkey, Thailand, Ireland, and Russia. The weapons generally have a range of about four miles, meaning that planes are safe while flying at 20,000 feet or higher, but vulnerable during takeoff and descent. The report notes that since surface-to-air missiles were first developed, in the late 1950s, there have been only six incidents in which passenger jets have been attacked with them; only two of these attacks were classified as "catastrophic," resulting in the deaths of all passengers on board. (The most recent attack occurred in Novem-

ber of 2002, when terrorists linked to al-Qaeda unsuccessfully fired two surface-to-air missiles at an Israeli passenger jet in Mombasa, Kenya.) The bad news, according to the report, is that there is no simple or affordable way of protecting planes from such missiles. If the U.S. government were to install countermeasures on each of the country's thousands of large passenger jets, the cost would be somewhere between one

and three million dollars per aircraft. Deterrence flares (which will soon be installed on planes flown by the Israeli airline El Al) are not good at fooling newer models of the missiles and pose a fire hazard to the areas surrounding an airport. Evasive maneuvering by pilots is deemed "not a viable option."

—"Homeland Security: Protecting Airliners From Terrorist Missiles," Christopher Bolkcom, Andrew Feickert, and Bartholomew Elias, Congressional Research Service

THE NATION

Road Kill

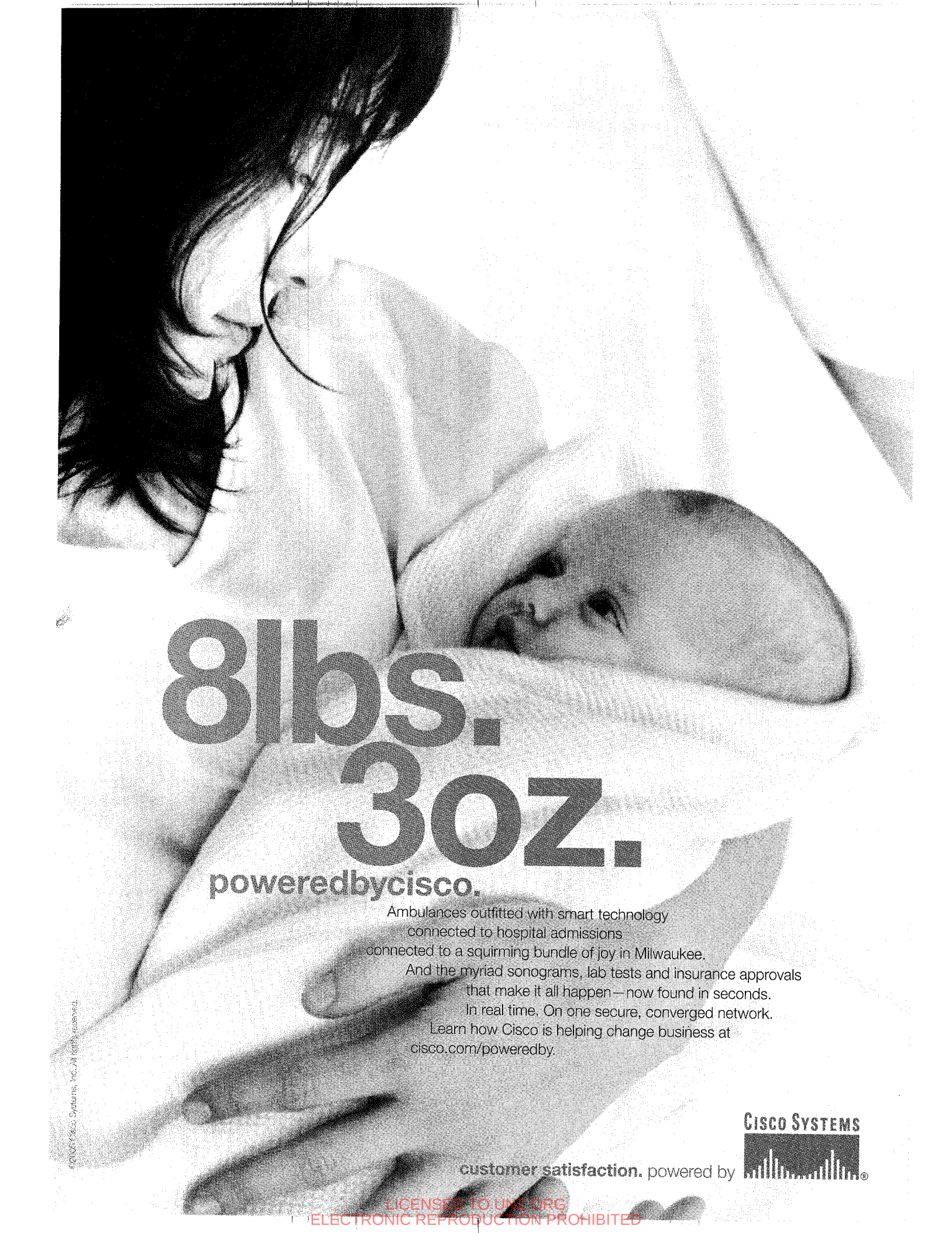
It always pays to look both ways when you cross the street, but it's particularly critical on the mean streets of Orlando, Florida. Or so one concludes from the Surface Transportation Policy Project, which calculates a Pedestrian Danger Index for American cities, based on the rate of pedestrian deaths relative to the amount of walking done in each metropolis. (The safest metropolitan area, surprisingly enough, is Boston, whose drivers are apparently far more careful than their nasty reputation would suggest.)

—"Mean Streets 2004: Pedestrian Safety, 1994–2003," Michelle Ernst, Surface Transportation Policy Project

MOST DANGEROUS LARGE METRO AREAS FOR PEDESTRIANS

(over a million residents)

	Average annual pedestrian deaths per 100,000 people (2002–2003)	Percent walking to work (2000)	Pedestrian Danger Index
1 Orlando, FL	3.15	1.3%	243.6
2 Tampa/St. Petersburg/Clearwater, FL	3.69	1.7%	215.3
3 West Palm Beach/Boca Raton, FL	2.86	1.4%	209.9
4 Miami/Fort Lauderdale, FL	2.94	1.8%	166.3
5 Memphis, TN	2.07	1.3%	159.1
6 Atlanta, GA	1.83	1.3%	144.4
7 Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point, NC	1.90	1.6%	122.5
8 Houston/Galveston/Brazoria, TX	1.97	1.6%	121.9
9 Jacksonville, FL	2.02	1.7%	120.7
10 Phoenix/Mesa, AZ	2.44	2.1%	117.2
11 Las Vegas, NV	2.74	2.4%	115.0
12 Detroit/Ann Arbor/Flint, MI	2.03	1.8%	111.3
13 Charlotte/Gastonia/Rock Hill, NC/SC	1.26	1.2%	103.9
14 Dallas/Fort Worth, TX	1.53	1.5%	103.7
15 Kansas City, MO/KS	1.36	1.4%	100.3
16 Sacramento/Yolo, CA	2.08	2.2%	95.9
17 St. Louis, MO	1.54	1.6%	95.0
18 Nashville, TN	1.40	1.5%	93.0
19 Oklahoma City, OK	1.44	1.7%	85.4
20 Los Angeles/Riverside/Orange County, CA	2.11	2.6%	82.5
21 New Orleans, LA	2.24	2.7%	82.5
22 San Antonio, TX	1.94	2.4%	82.1
23 Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, NC	1.84	2.3%	80.2
24 Louisville, KY	1.34	1.7%	78.1
25 Grand Rapids/Muskegon/Holland, MI	1.56	2.1%	75.8



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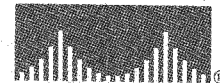
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Casualties of War

How much worse would America's Iraq War casualty figures be if we had only Vietnam War-era methods of transporting the wounded? That's one of the questions Atul Gawande, a medical doctor and a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, poses in a recent report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. (The answer: a lot worse.) Analyzing ratios of killed-in-action to wounded-in-action, Gawande points out that although the lethality of combat wounds has dropped sharply since World War II, the steepest drop has come since the 1991 Gulf War: 24 percent of soldiers wounded in that conflict died, compared with just 10 percent in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gawande attributes this startling drop to leaner and more mobile medical units, which have reduced the lag time between suffering an injury and reaching surgical care. (In Vietnam only 2.6 percent of wounded soldiers who arrived at a field hospital died—most fatalities occurred en route.) Soldiers wounded in Iraq are also transferred swiftly from one hospital to another: if they need more than three days of treatment, they are moved from Iraq to a hospital in Europe or Kuwait; and if they need more than thirty days of treatment, they are sent back to the United States. Gawande cites a case of an airman severely injured in a mortar attack who went from an Iraqi mobile hospital to surgery in Germany to Walter Reed Hospital, in the United States—all within thirty-six hours. (He survived, but as a triple amputee.)

LETHALITY OF WAR WOUNDS

among U.S. soldiers

(SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE)

	Number wounded or killed in action	Number killed in action	Lethality of war wounds
Revolutionary War, 1775–1783	10,623	4,435	42%
War of 1812, 1812–1815	6,765	2,260	33%
Mexican War, 1846–1848	5,885	1,733	29%
Civil War (Union Force), 1861–1865	422,295	140,414	33%
Spanish-American War, 1898	2,047	385	19%
World War I, 1917–1918	257,404	53,402	21%
World War II, 1941–1945	963,403	291,557	30%
Korean War, 1950–1953	137,025	33,741	25%
Vietnam War, 1961–1973	200,727	47,424	24%
Persian Gulf War, 1990–1991	614	147	24%
Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan, through 11/04	10,369	1,004	10%

—“Casualties of War: Military Care for the Wounded From Iraq and Afghanistan,” Atul Gawande, *New England Journal of Medicine*

The Finger of Destiny

Male scientists may be born, not made, a new study suggests—and the best way to tell if your son could be the next Einstein or Hawking might be to look at his fingers. According to a survey of academics carried out at Britain's University of Bath, men teaching hard-science subjects, such as mathematics and physics, tend to have index fingers

as long as their ring fingers, indicating that they have testosterone levels equal to their estrogen levels. (The ratio of finger lengths is determined by one's exposure to estrogen and testosterone in the womb, and is the same at birth and middle age.) Male academics who teach in social-science subjects, such as education and psychology, have a more typical index-to-ring-finger

ratio, suggesting a more typical testosterone-to-estrogen balance. The researchers speculate that lower-than-average testosterone levels in men may lead to unusually good spatial skills, which are useful in the hard sciences—and which develop at the expense of the language and people skills that are favored in the social sciences. Or perhaps it's a matter of spare time: the long-index-fingered, low-testosterone male is also less likely to have children, presumably leaving him with more free hours in which to plumb the mysteries of the universe.

—“Indexing Science: Report on Digit Ratios of Academic Staff,” Mark Brosnan, University of Bath

SOCIETY

Friends Don't Let Friends Dial Drunk

What do most people do on a Saturday night when they've had one too many? Ninety-five percent of Virgin Mobile customers reach for their cell phones, according to a recent survey conducted by the phone company's Australian branch. Who are the lucky recipients of their sloshed calls? Among those admitting to DUI (“dialing under the influence”), only 19 percent felt inspired to chat with their current romantic partners—whereas 30 percent reported calling their exes. The largest group of respondents (36 percent of the total) rang up “anyone and everyone”—a category that presumably includes bosses and parents. Drunk dialing is so common that Virgin Mobile now offers customers the option of blacklisting selected phone numbers (at a cost of twenty-five cents per number) before heading out for a night on the town. The process takes only a minute,

and the blacklisted numbers are off limits until six o'clock the next morning.

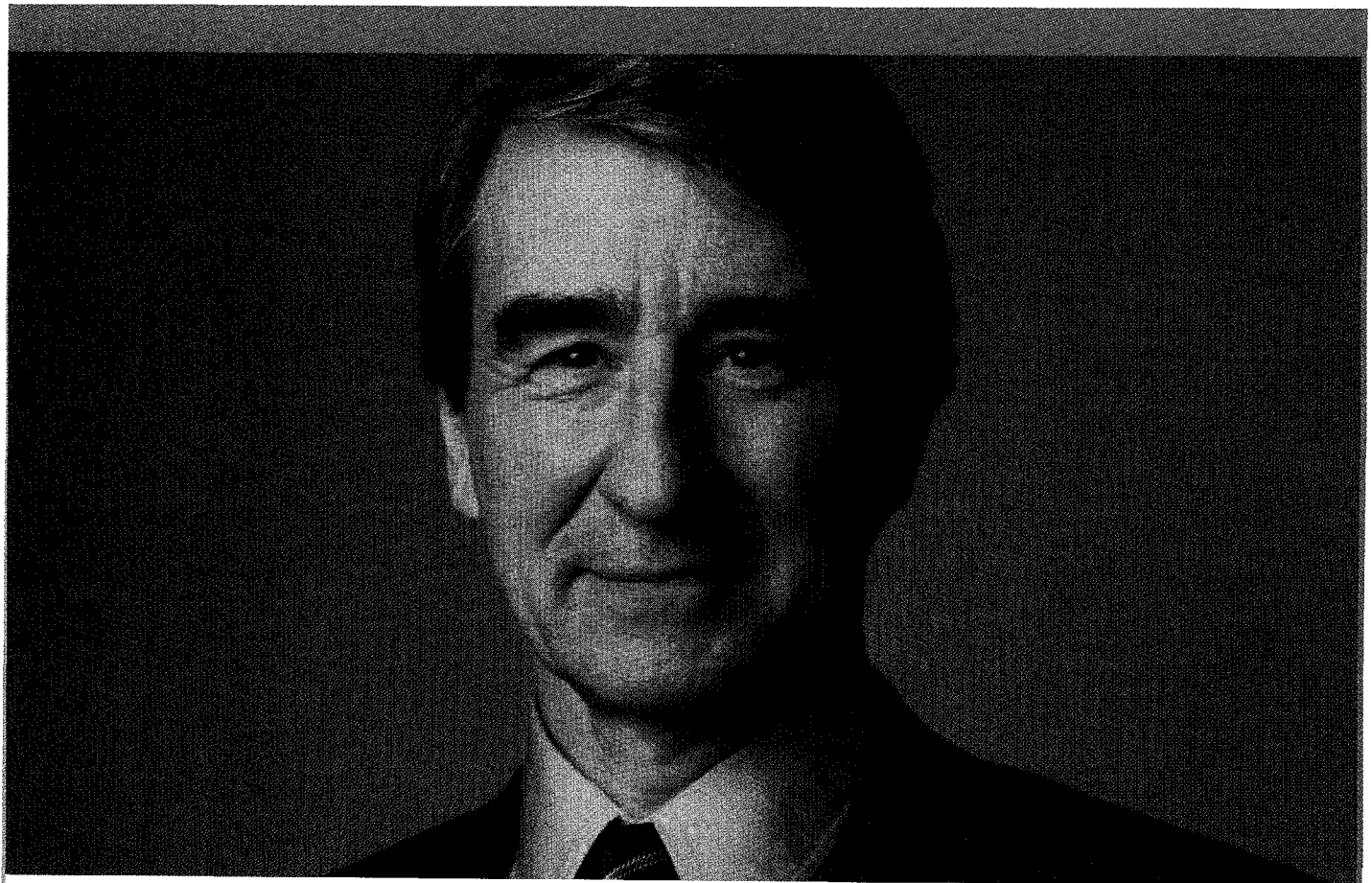
—“Dialing Under the Influence,” Kerry Parkin, Virgin Mobile

Sex and the Single Teen

At a time when politicians bicker about whether to hand out condoms or teach kids abstinence, the kids themselves seem to be hearing both messages. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overall teenage sexual activity declined sharply in the late 1990s, while birth-control use among those teens who were having sex rose dramatically. In 1995, 55 percent of boys and 38 percent of girls ages fifteen to seventeen reported having had sexual intercourse; by 2002 the numbers had fallen to 46 and 30 percent, respectively—and there were similar declines among the under-fifteen set. Among those teens who did have intercourse, 79 percent reported using birth control, up by 18 percentage points from the 1980s. (Contraceptive use “at first intercourse” also rose significantly in the period studied.) Together these findings help explain the recent striking decrease in the rate of teen pregnancy. But disquietingly, the report notes that 10 percent of teen girls described the first time they had sex as “nonvoluntary.”

—“Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2002,” J. C. Abma, G. M. Martinez, W. D. Mosher, and B. S. Dawson, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Compiled by Ross Douhat, Abigail Cutler, and Terrence Henry. For links to the reports and documents discussed in these pages visit www.theatlantic.com/doc/200503/primarysources



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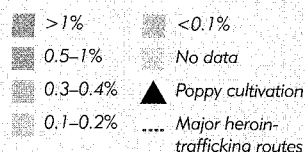
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TDW3851

ABUSE OF OPIATES

Percentage of adult population



HEROIN AT HOME

Only about 7 to 10 percent of heroin in America comes from Afghanistan, although that proportion is on the rise. Mexico long produced most of the heroin for the American market, but South Americans have come to dominate the trade. Colombian cocaine cartels expanded into heroin in the 1990s by piggybacking on their existing cocaine-distribution rings. (The bulk of South American heroin comes by air courier through Miami.) At best, U.S. law enforcement seizes 10 percent of all inbound heroin.

THE WORLD IN NUMBERS

The New Opium War

A U.S.-backed anti-drug initiative may be the only way to keep Afghanistan from falling apart

It's nearly harvest time in Afghanistan. Soon the crowns on the poppies will point up, a sign that the pods are plump enough to be lanced. In the late afternoon farmers will score the capsules and let white gum seep out, working backwards through the fields to keep from disturbing the crop. They will return in the morning, after the gum has dried into a black tar, and scrape it off with wide knives. By this slow work Afghanistan's farmers produce 87 percent of the world's illicit opium.

The accompanying map—which is based on the work of Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, a Paris-based expert on the history and politics of heroin—shows major production centers and trade routes for opiates worldwide. Poppy cultivation is overwhelmingly concentrated in just three countries—Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), and Laos—although several other states are minor producers. Rates of opiate abuse are also shown on the map. While many nongeographic factors—including wealth, culture, and the prevalence of other drugs—influence opiate use, the highest rates of abuse are to be found near major sources of supply; a large band of abuse runs around Afghanistan, and a somewhat smaller one circles Myanmar.

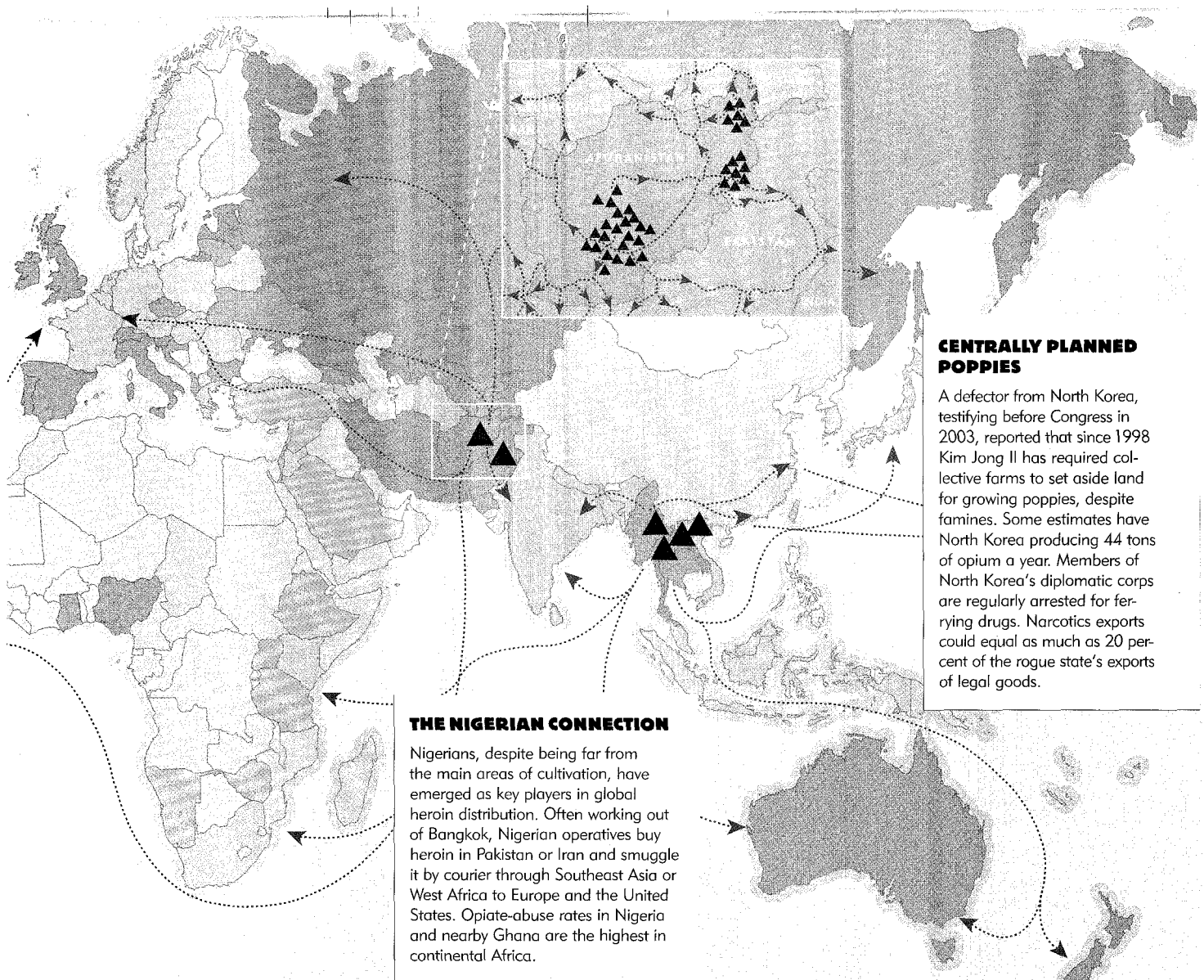
Afghanistan's status as the world's dominant supplier owes as much to pol-

itics as to climate or geography. Over the past fifty years poppy fields have moved from country to country, like fugitives switching safe houses. During the reign of the British Empire, China and India produced nearly all of the world's opium, but a program of eradication undertaken by Chinese Communists after World War II drove the Chinese industry southward into the "Golden Triangle" around Burma. Successive crackdowns in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan drove Southwest Asian production into Afghanistan. The heroin trade thrives in warring and weak states. Thus Afghanistan—racked by twenty-five years of war—has come to dominate the global market.

Traditionally, most opiates produced in Afghanistan made their way south, through Iran, on their way to other markets worldwide. (Iranians have the world's highest rate of opiate abuse—2.8 percent of the population.) But Iran has worked to cut off these routes, seizing eighty tons of opiates in 2002 (or 25 percent of the total seized in the world that year). As a result, heroin trafficking has shifted to northern routes through the former Soviet Union, where passage has been eased by rising corruption.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda are both widely believed to be involved in the opium trade. A recent raid on

a Taliban stronghold in Afghanistan turned up \$15 million worth of opium gum, and suspected al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan are believed to receive about 4,000 pounds of processed heroin (with a local street value of roughly \$6 million) every two months. The discovery of suspected al-Qaeda associates on the Arabian Sea, smuggling heroin out of Pakistan, has led U.S. officials to fear that al-Qaeda's reach is extending further along the supply chain, nearer to retail markets. Some counterterrorism experts in the United States are worried that the expansion of heroin trade routes through Russia's nuclear belt—where much highly enriched fissile material is housed—might give Islamist extremists access to



nuclear materials, though to date there is no evidence that this has happened. The Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan, an extremist group heavily involved in organized crime, once controlled 70 percent of the opium trade through Central Asia and even launched cross-border attacks to maintain trafficking dominance. U.S. counterterrorism efforts since the Afghan war, however, have largely dismantled the group.

When the Taliban banned poppy cultivation in 2000, opium production declined by 94 percent. But after the Taliban fell, the U.S. focus was on rooting out terrorists, rather than on policing the drug trade. (This was partly to avoid alienating our warlord allies, most of whom benefited from trafficking.) Since then cultivation has exploded, increasing sixteenfold. Last year's harvest was the second largest in the

country's history, and accounted for the equivalent of 60 percent of Afghan GDP.

The United States now finds itself in a difficult position. On the one hand, if the warlords and the Taliban maintain independence (by funding their militias through the drug trade), Afghanistan will continue as a failed state run by militias, drug cartels, rebels, and terrorist groups, all well financed and warring over the drug trade. On the other hand, if the United States acts aggressively to eradicate Afghan opium, it could alienate peasants who depend on the poppy crop, and prompt rebellion. Wheat and grapes dominated Afghanistan's agricultural economy before the wars. But now many farmers, trapped by debts to opium wholesalers, have no choice but to grow poppies.

With Afghanistan's presidential elections out of the way, eradicating

the opium trade has become a top priority for the United States, which will launch a \$780 million anti-drug initiative this spring. Called Plan Afghanistan, the new effort combines aid to farmers with eradication and interdiction, all backed by Afghan forces and private security contractors. By drying up the heroin trade, the Afghans hope to bring the warlords to heel (or at least to encourage them to exchange their military clout for political capital in the central government). The initiative will coincide with Afghanistan's regional parliamentary elections, currently scheduled for April. The outcome of these ventures will be a crucial indication of whether the central government can finally set Afghanistan's ethnic groups and warlord fiefdoms on a path toward unity and stability. —MATTHEW QUIRK

THE ACCUSER

One woman has spent decades documenting crimes against humanity in Iraq. Now Saddam and his circle are facing justice

BY WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

Photographs by Francesco Zizola

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The trials of the former leaders of Iraq will begin this spring. They will take place in the intact chambers of a bombed-out building at the center of Baghdad. The court that will hold them is an Iraqi national court but an American invention. It is called the Iraqi Special Tribunal. It has no function beyond these trials. It is staffed by Iraqi judges and prosecutors who after thirty-five years of totalitarian rule have no experience with the evolved legal concepts and procedures that they will be asked to use here. In the background stands a team of American government lawyers whose own experience in such matters is thin. If the purpose of these trials is to promote court-

room justice as an alternative to the Arab tradition of vengeance, the best one can hope for is that the tribunal will be able to learn on the job. The first of the trials should be the simplest, at least. It will be of Ali Hassan al-Majid, the man known as Chemical Ali, who is Saddam Hussein's cousin, and was a trusted agent of the regime. The evidence against him is clear. He organized the systematic extermination of the Kurds in Iraq's north, then turned south and oversaw the rape of Kuwait. Subsequently he oversaw the suppression of an Iraqi uprising by directing overwhelming military force against civilian populations in flagrant violation of the laws of war. Like Saddam Hussein, he will be

William Langewiesche is a national correspondent for The Atlantic. This is the first of what will be a series of reports about tribunals and the process of justice in Iraq.



prosecuted for genocide, among other crimes. Almost certainly he will be convicted and sentenced to die.

In practice if not by intent, this will be the end product of a decades-long campaign by international human-rights activists to document the atrocities of the Baathist regime, and to hold the leaders responsible. As it happens, the same activists have now turned against the special tribunal, because they believe that as constituted, as a national court, it cannot deliver justice. They also abhor capital punishment, which the tribunal is set up to impose. So be it. The activists are sticking to their principles, as they must. They are idealists, no doubt. But they are also hardened realists—not to be confused with the volunteers one

sees distributing pamphlets on the streets of Europe and the United States, or blindly advocating peace. The veterans of the Iraq campaign are powerful players, cagey and brave, and effective on dangerous terrain. They are used to maneuver and compromise, and to war. Little wonder, therefore, that despite their opposition to the trials in their current form, they remain engaged in the process, still trying to shape it, in the chaos of Iraq.

Of those veterans there is one who by common agreement can stand for all the rest. She is Hania Mufti, a Jordanian by birth and upbringing but a longtime Londoner, and recently a resident of Iraq. Mufti is forty-seven. She is a tall, gaunt woman, with dark blue eyes, cropped hair, and usually a cigarette in hand. Her experience in life has made her spare, reserved, and judgmental. As such she is no apologist for the occupying Americans. Indeed, much of her time now is spent looking into abuses by U.S. forces and the Iraqi government they installed. But for twenty years she has been the most persistent investigator of the former regime's crimes. It is because of her efforts—along with those of a few people like her, a small circle of her friends—that the war makers of Great Britain and the United States were able to cite human-rights violations as a justification for their invasion, and that Saddam Hussein and his lieutenants will now be brought to trial. Mufti is an unusually private person, who shuns public attention and exerts her influence increasingly through backroom discussion as well as through published reports. But whether she desires this credit or not, there is no escaping the fact that behind the headlines about crimes and justice stands the mass of work that she and her associates have done.

At a late point in that work, in the fall of 2002, Hania Mufti rode in a hired car through the mountains of Iran toward the border with Iraq. This was half a year before the American invasion. As a woman traveling in Iran, Mufti was relegated to the car's back seat, swathed in heavy clothes, and forced to wear a scarf. The smothering annoyed her, but she did not complain. Personal discomfort and the oppression of women seemed minor compared with what lay ahead in Iraq: a nightmare filled with the most brutal political horrors, including severe torture and indiscriminate human slaughter. After a long career with Amnesty International, Mufti was now working for Human Rights Watch, a powerful New York-based organization, where she held the grand title London Director of the Middle East and North African Division. Effectively this meant Iraq. In the early 1990s Human Rights Watch had collected the crucial documents and testimony pertaining to Ali Hassan al-Majid's extermination campaign, and after sober legal consideration had been the first to define it as genocide and to call for international prosecution, in absentia if necessary. The organization lobbied governments in Europe and the United States to secure sponsorship for

a trial. For practical as well as political reasons, that idea never took hold, and after a while Human Rights Watch turned to other matters. Iraq, however, was not a subject that could be abandoned for long—nor could the idea that it was justice, and not merely regime change, that had to be accomplished there. When the organization decided, in 2000, to try to turn up the heat, Hania Mufti was the natural person to enlist.

With Mufti in the car now, two years later, was another experienced Human Rights Watch employee, a fresh-faced Belgian-American named Peter Bouckaert, age thirty-two, who served as the organization's "senior emergencies researcher" and made his living by traveling to trouble spots around the globe, usually alone. Mufti and Bouckaert had never worked together before. Because entry into central Iraq at that time would have been pointless and quite likely fatal, their destination was Kurdistan, the mountainous enclave in the northern part of the country, where Ali Hassan al-Majid had unleashed his terrors. With assistance from the West, Kurdistan had fought its way clear of the

The first of the trials will be of Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as Chemical Ali. The evidence against him is clear. He organized the extermination of the Kurds, then turned south and oversaw the rape of Kuwait.

central government's control in 1991, and had functioned as a Kurdish proto-state ever since, providing a haven within Iraq where human-rights investigators could gather evidence. Mufti knew it well. She and Bouckaert planned to spend three weeks there, where they would interview recent refugees about the latest horrors to the south, including extra-judicial killings, widespread torture, and the continuing expulsion of non-Arabs from the oil fields of Kirkuk. Frankly, such behavior was ordinary governmental fare in Iraq, and might not in itself have justified the expense and effort of the trip. But there was more in the air by that fall, because the carefully gathered record of Iraqi atrocities was being used by American and British leaders not to build a case for justice but to provide an emotional foundation for the claim that Saddam Hussein would use the weapons of mass destruction he was said to possess. Suddenly it was war that appeared ahead.

Peter Bouckaert was going in because of that, and with motives that were simple to understand. A war would certainly qualify as an "emergency," and he wanted to assess the challenges in advance, particularly for the Human Rights Watch teams that might come in for short stays during the

expected combat. Mufti's motives were more complex. The truth is that she traveled to Kurdistan whenever she could, and for whatever reason. She was like the human-rights movement at large—drawn to Iraq because of the sheer scale of the suffering there, which she had first encountered as an abstract professional challenge decades before, but which then had gotten inside of her and shaped her soul. She would have disagreed if asked, and would have insisted that she had maintained professional distance and control. She would have said that she was taking this trip because Iraq was one of the countries in her brief, and, by the way, because she and her husband had a London mortgage to pay. Fine. She once explained to me that she believed in shielding her private life from her public one. This was awkward, because it was so obvious to me that she had failed. Her friends worried about her. They pointed out that Iraq was not her native country, and wondered why she would dedicate herself to such a place. I've been told that when she was in her early twenties, in London, she was a saucy girl with waist-length hair, and that though she was smart and unusually diligent at work, her attitude toward life was quite wonderfully carefree. That may almost be true. You can see hints of some earlier life in little lapses in the seriousness of her eyes, and in traces of girlish vanity—the cut of her cotton blouse, or her chagrin that exhaustion is visible on her face. She does remain a striking woman. Still, her work has made her seem radically unadorned.

For the last miles approaching the border Mufti and Bouckaert passed through an apocalyptic landscape of abandoned trenches, active minefields, and ruined tanks—the residue of the Iran-Iraq War, still fresh after fourteen years. They crossed into Kurdistan without incident, and were met by a big, garrulous man named Hawar Rathman, who would serve as their driver, and who eighteen months later, in February of 2004, would be killed in the suicide bombing of a political assembly, in "liberated" Iraq. Rathman drove them to the pleasant city of Sulaymaniyah, to the office of a Kurdish deputy prime minister, a man named Adnan Mufti, who was unrelated to Hania, but very friendly.

Afterward Bouckaert mentioned that the welcome had seemed unusually warm, and Mufti answered, in her usual low-key manner, "Oh, a few years ago I saved his life." She left it at that. It turned out that Adnan Mufti had been poisoned with thallium, a lethal powder that Saddam Hussein's agents sometimes mixed into orange juice or yogurt and fed to people perceived to be enemies of the regime. In 1987 there was a spate of at least forty such poisonings, largely of Kurdish leaders. Hania Mufti was at Amnesty International in London at the time. With characteristic determination, she bore down on the news: Adnan Mufti, among others, had fled to Tehran, where he lay in excruciating pain, losing hair and unable to eat, lingering near death. Hania Mufti arranged to evacuate him, along with two others. The

three men were flown to London and rushed to a hospital, and they survived. Though she had yet to set foot in any part of Iraq, which in 1987 remained a completely closed state, Mufti's rescue operation counts among the first direct human-rights interventions there, significant because it was an unambiguous success.

Fifteen years later now, a larger intervention loomed ahead. For three weeks Mufti and Bouckaert worked their way through the mountains of Kurdistan, recording stories of the regime. But much of their attention, like that of their Kurdish hosts, was on the world outside Iraq, being shown on satellite TV. The British government published an argument for war, making explicit reference to the work of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. President George W. Bush addressed the United Nations, bluntly describing the reality inside Iraq. He said, "Tens of thousands of political opponents and ordinary citizens have been subjected to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, summary execution, and torture by beating and burning, electric shock, starvation, mutilation, and rape." Iraqi Kurds clustered around their televisions and cheered.

To preserve their credibility as unbiased observers, human-rights organizations were officially neutral on the question of the war. Individually, however, many of the investigators were uncomfortable with the American policy of pre-emptive aggression, and with the tone and tactics of the Bush administration. Bouckaert, for one, made no secret, there in Kurdistan, of his doubts. He later told me that their driver, Hawar Rathman, was practically ecstatic at the thought that the Americans were coming. Rathman talked often about how beautiful Iraq was going to be after its liberation, about how he was going to take his children to Baghdad to eat fish in fine restaurants on the banks of the Tigris. Bouckaert warned him repeatedly of something he had observed before, of the social breakdown that accompanies war.

Mufti was more guarded about her thoughts. When I asked her what she had felt in Kurdistan during the lead-up to the invasion, she did not answer for herself but described the concern of the people around her. They were worried that international opposition to the war might cause Britain and the United States to hesitate, or back down. She said, "The question about whether there were weapons of mass destruction or not, I think for many Iraqis that was just a red herring. It didn't matter whether they were found. And there were all these antiwar demonstrations being shown on television, in Europe and the States, and elsewhere in the Middle East. And I remember sitting with various groups of Kurds watching the news, and they'd look at the TV screen and gesture in this way"—she waved her hand dismissively—"and they'd say, 'These people don't know what they're talking about. They should come here and try Saddam for a while, and see whether or not they like it for themselves.'"

This war as they saw it would be fought over human rights. In New York the head of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, later took pains to deny that the invasion had been about that, but to many observers he really did protest too much. In any case by then there was little other justification to hold on to.

The Iraqi Special Tribunal was signed into existence by the American proconsul Paul Bremer, on December 9, 2003, during the formal occupation of Iraq. It was largely the product of a brainy, Yale-educated commercial lawyer named Salem Chalabi. He is the nephew of Ahmad Chalabi, the expatriate leader of the Iraqi National Congress, who helped persuade the United States to attack, and was later found to have been peddling lies. Family allegiances aside, Salem Chalabi is a man of greater sincerity than his uncle. He returned to Baghdad close on the heels of the American forces, with high hopes for the competence of a free Iraq. These were hopes he later came to see as unrealistic, but they informed his design for the special tribunal and his earnest belief that it could function correctly as an Iraqi national court. The founding statute that he drafted imports from international law three categories of the most egregious crimes for use in an Iraqi prosecution, and lays the boundaries of the trials to come:

The Tribunal shall have jurisdiction over any Iraqi national or resident of Iraq accused of the crimes listed in Articles 11–14, committed since July 17, 1968, and up and until May 1, 2003, in the territory of Iraq or elsewhere, namely:

- a) The crime of genocide;
- b) Crimes against humanity;
- c) War crimes; or
- d) Violations of certain Iraqi laws listed in Article 14

below.

The first three categories of crimes, which rank from top to bottom in the measure of governmental depravity, are then defined in detail, and narrowly tailored to address the atrocities committed by the Baathist regime. Those definitions are deeply rooted in the work of the human-rights movement since its modern beginnings.

In 1946 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was established in Geneva and given the job of upholding human rights worldwide. That job was largely symbolic. In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed by forty-eight countries, including Iraq. The declaration put words to the principles of human rights, and laid the foundation for further agreements that, after permutations, were loosely accepted as descriptions of customary beliefs, and thus formed the basis for some elements of international law. In that same year the state of Israel was founded on land that Palestinian Arabs thought was their own.

Nine years later, in 1957, Hania Mufti was born in nearby Amman, Jordan. She was one of five children in a prominent

Circassian family, which had a tradition of high government service. Her father was a banker, and once served as Jordan's minister of finance. Early in 1959 the government of Iraq, a military dictatorship, signed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Hania was not yet quite two. In 1961, when she was four, she was sent with an older sister to live and study in a Catholic convent school in Jerusalem, a few hours' drive from home. This was ordinary for the elites of Amman at the time. The school was for girls only. The classes were taught in French. As a nominal Muslim, Hania was not proselytized. On Sunday mornings, when the Christian girls had to go to church, she was allowed to sleep.

Also in 1961, in faraway London, a British lawyer named Peter Benenson founded Amnesty International as a membership-supported organization, initially to lobby for the freedom of certain prisoners being held for their political beliefs. As measured by popularity, it was an immediate success, and within a year had established branches in fourteen countries worldwide. Meanwhile, various coups and countercoups roiled the political life of Iraq, including one that brought the pan-Arab socialists of the Baath Party to power for nine months in 1963. Throughout that time Kurdish guerrillas in the northern mountains fought whichever clique happened to constitute the central government, in a war without

For twenty years Hania Mufti was the most persistent investigator of the Iraqi regime's crimes. It is because of the efforts of people like her that Saddam and his lieutenants will now be brought to trial.

resolution. None of this had the slightest effect on the life of young Hania Mufti, whose own country was relatively quiet, and who was snugly cocooned in her Jerusalem convent school. But then came June of 1967, when the Six-Day War broke out between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and Hania, at the age of not quite ten, got caught up in the fighting.

It happened on the third day of the war, as the Arab forces were being crushed and humiliated by the Israelis. Along with her sister and several cousins, Hania was evacuated from Jerusalem in a convoy of five taxis headed toward Amman. The trip took all day and more. Sometimes the taxis were stopped by fighting just ahead. Other times, when the fighting swirled around them, they kept moving, threading through the battles, past explosions and Jordanian troops firing from positions on the shoulders of the road. Hania watched two soldiers burning just beside her car. Later the first taxi in the line took a direct hit, perhaps

from an artillery shell. Hania saw it explode with a flash of red, just as in the movies. They kept driving. When they arrived in Amman, it was late at night, and the city was blacked out. The taxi crept forward without headlights, down cratered streets, stopping often while the driver got out to feel the terrain ahead with his feet.

Next door in Iraq, in 1968, the Baath Party staged another coup, and returned to power. This time it was led by Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, who was Saddam Hussein's elder cousin; Saddam Hussein himself was operating just offstage, as the second in command. Two months later, after a countercoup was discovered and crushed, the leadership launched a series of Stalinist-style purges, cleansing the higher reaches of the government and the military of suspected rivals and opponents—a process that expanded across the decades into one of the great horror stories of our time, but even at the start was spectacular enough, marked by public executions and bodies strung up in the squares of Baghdad for all the citizens to admire.

Hania Mufti's parents left Amman and moved to Beirut. Hania and her sister went off to England to attend boarding school. They came home for holidays. They were not lonely, as children from some other culture might have been. This was what they knew, and by any measure it worked out well.

In January of 1969 fourteen "spies," nine of whom were Jews, were publicly hanged in Baghdad's Liberation Square. Untold numbers of other Iraqis were being thrown into prison, being tortured, enduring mock executions, being killed.

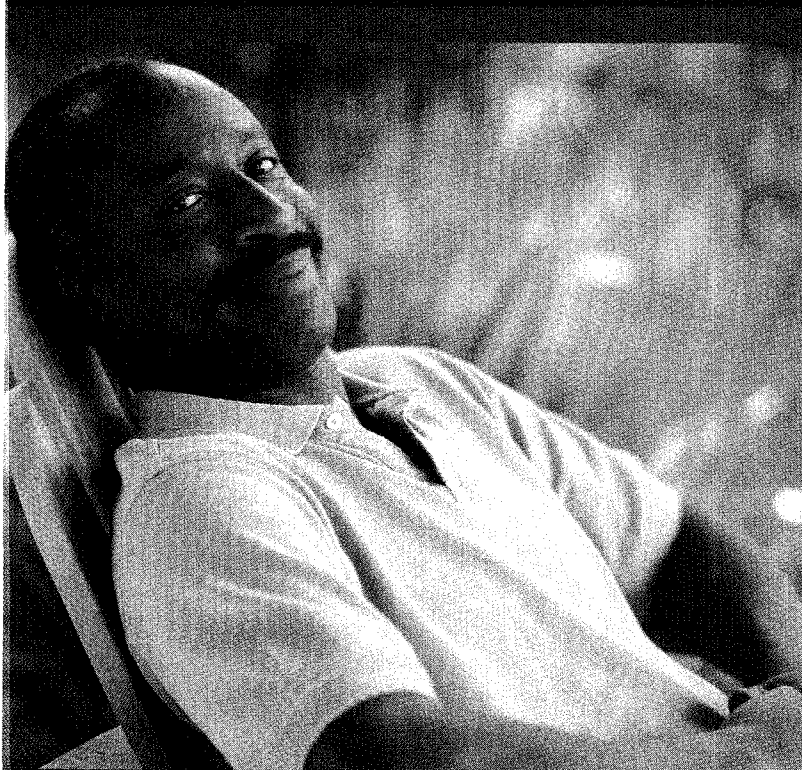
In August sixty-seven Kurdish women and children, who had fled Iraqi artillery attacks on their village, were said by Kurdish sources to have been burned to death in a cave where they had sought refuge.

In November, President al-Bakr formally named Saddam Hussein as the deputy chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, and gave him full control of the growing number of intelligence and security services.

In March of 1970 hundreds of Iraqi communists were arrested, tortured, broken, wiped out. Many of their families were arrested too, soon afterward or later on. Terror seeped through every crack of Iraqi society as Saddam Hussein tightened his control.

Meanwhile, Hania Mufti was living well. At the age of fourteen she returned from England to attend a coeducational Quaker boarding school in a beautiful mountain village called Brummana, overlooking Beirut and the Mediterranean Sea. Beirut was still an island of tolerance at the time, and the Quaker school was the same to a higher degree. It was enlightened, pacifist, secular, accepting, and intellectually strong—an island within an island in the Middle East. These were years of happiness for Hania, and she bloomed. Jerusalem was old history, Amman a fading memory. Baghdad hardly existed at all.

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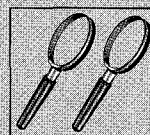
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Then, again, an armed conflict washed over her. This time it was the Lebanese civil war, which began in the spring of 1975, several months before Hania was due to graduate. As she sat for final exams in her familiar classrooms in the mountains, she watched columns of smoke and dust rising from the city below. It was a war all right, but of the modern sort, whose dangers were partly obscured by the apparent normalcy of life. The cafés remained open, traffic still flowed through the streets, and the Mediterranean continued to sparkle in the clean Lebanese light. Hania finished her exams, and graduated on schedule in a pleasant campus ceremony. Her family moved back to Amman, out of concern for the future, but Hania was nearly an adult now, and she gamely stayed on. In the fall she started studies at the American University of Beirut, on the waterfront, close to downtown. For a scholastic term and a half the lecturers struggled forward against conditions that were increasingly disruptive. For Hania and other students there, university life was marked by long spells in shelters underground, while the fighting crackled and thumped overhead. At some point the lectures were suspended. One day the Jordanian government sent in an airplane, picked up the Jordanian students there, and flew them home. The students thought they would be gone for a week or two. But the fighting intensified and went on for another fifteen years. After several months in Amman, Hania Mufti moved to England to continue her education. It was the fall of 1976.

The Iraqi Special Tribunal was largely the product of a Yale-educated lawyer, Salem Chalabi, who returned to Baghdad with high hopes for the competence of a free Iraq. These were hopes he came to see as unrealistic.

In 1977 the Geneva Convention was augmented by two new protocols that expanded the protection of civilians caught up in zones of guerrilla combat and in other nonconventional revolutionary struggles. Iraq did not sign. That same year Amnesty International issued a crudely typewritten summary of the Kurdish predicament in northern Iraq, reporting that separatist attacks had increased, and that the government had responded with executions, mass arrests, and a policy of forced deportations, carried out not merely against suspected fighters but, in some cases, also against their families.

In 1978 in suburban London an expatriate Iraqi surgeon and opposition leader named Ayad Allawi received a taunting late-night telephone call from a man he recognized as a half brother of Saddam's. Several hours later an Iraqi assassin

broke into Allawi's house, while two other agents waited in a getaway car outside. Allawi was preparing for bed when he noticed a movement behind a curtain. The assassin sprang from hiding and attacked him with an ax—a weapon chosen for the gruesome trauma it would inflict. Allawi fought back, but was felled by blood-splattering blows, one of which sliced into his head, and another of which nearly severed a leg. He was saved by his wife's screams, and the intervention of his father-in-law. The assassin fled. Allawi spent the next eighteen months in hospitals under an assumed identity. It has been reported by London's *Sunday Telegraph* that Iraqi agents tracked him down nonetheless, and that while he was in the hospitals they sent him death threats, one of which read, "Even if you go to Mars, we will follow you." This was by no means an empty boast. Expatriate groups were systematically penetrated by agents of the Baathist regime, and over the years no small number of leaders were killed. Allawi, of course, was not one of them; he survived to become the first prime minister of post-Saddam Iraq.

Also in 1978, in New York, the organization Human Rights Watch—known first as Helsinki Watch—was launched by a group of writers and publishers, initially to monitor political freedoms in the Soviet Union. As might be expected of such a group, its strategies were based not on public protests but on careful research and analysis, and on the power of clear writing.

In July of 1979, in Baghdad, Saddam Hussein formally assumed the presidency. A few days later, in a famous piece of political theater, he assembled several hundred of the country's Baathist leaders in a Baghdad conference hall, and with an air of regret and sadness sat through the naming of sixty traitors among them, who were accused of having conspired with Syria to subvert the government. As the names were called one by one, the men were escorted from the room, ultimately to face firing squads. Saddam congratulated the remaining leaders for their loyalty. It is said that they stood and applauded in terror and relief, and that the meeting ended with raucous laughter bordering on hysteria. Afterward film footage of the spectacle was shown at Baath Party meetings throughout the country—in the unlikely event that anyone harbored illusions about the nature of the regime in Baghdad.

July of 1979 happened also to be the month of Hania Mufti's graduation with a master's degree from the University of Bath. Years later I asked her if she had been aware of the happenings in Iraq, and she said, "Not a clue." That turned out to be not quite right, because as a Jordanian she did have a general sense of the severity of the neighboring regime; but it is true that she was not much involved in politics at the time. She would have liked to become a forensic pathologist, but had difficulty with chemistry. Instead she studied sociology and Third World "development," a typical mishmash of topics. She was by no means an activist. She had an Iranian friend who was, and who worked

Shade canopy accessories Barrier strips Chalkboards Therapeutic ultrasound PIN photo diode modules Medical monitoring services Check valves Resin systems Chemical oxygen generators All-in-one touch computers Chartering cable ships Elastic bandages Wireless systems Chillers Semiconductor heat sinks Digital audio services Automotive module relays Surface mounted cabinets Rotary switches Flame retardants Pressure seal closures Electric portable air compressors Circuit breakers Automotive quality inspection equipment Solid-state components Gas discharge tube replacements Components for camcorders Panel indicators Firefighter breathing systems Heat isolation devices Climate monitoring Hazardous material protective suits Solid-state subsystems Signal magnetics Passive electronics Medical oxygen delivery Grounding connectors Telescoping sign support systems Broadband driver amplifiers Champagne glasses Drinking bottles Polymeric and porcelain surge arrestors for distribution and transmission networks Automotive power relays Garment hangers Microcassette assemblies Snack food packaging Aircraft wire and power cables Modem cable assemblies Industrial control switches Continuous-slot metal framing Landfill development Multi-mode radar Patch cable assemblies Shielded and coaxial cable slices Wine glasses Flame-retardant tape Range hoods Halogen-free cables for commercial and offshore applications Absorbable monofilament sutures Cable TV converters Terminals and connectors for underground networks Syringe dispensers Cordless telephone batteries Fire protection systems Tubing for outdoor furniture framing Sensor wraps Easels PIN diodes High-performance solid-state relays and power controllers Wire harness tape Ceramic burners Electrical equipment for saunas Cylindrical control connectors Terminals and splices Security systems Relay sockets and accessories Arson detection Galvanized steel tubing Paperboard Counters and timers Sealed connectors Database assemblies Television sets DC converters Subcutaneous sensors Pipe and tube products Electrical tape High pass filter inductors Pistol grip hand tool systems for IDCs Adhesive tape Segmentally welded pipe fittings USB cables Construction management Deactivators International mains adapters Suction instruments Test equipment Steel box connectors Calibration equipment and services Plastic tumblers Cable trays Verified audio detection Thermoplastic piping systems Coaxial cable terminators Digital cable assemblies Waveguides Plastics engineering Institutional timekeeping Photocopiers Cabled and blind-mate power connectors High-performance connectors Safety relief valves Access floor modules Halogen-free wire Power systems Raised face flanges Connectors for high-voltage substations Flexible non-metallic conduit Reduced wall flexible metal conduit Catheters Medication nebulizers Digital metering systems Wiring harness sockets Automobile steering columns Pediatric monitoring equipment Cable design conductors Flame-retardant tubing for nuclear environments Roofing systems Ways Digital products Air sampling equipment Voltage wheels Customized point-of-sale receipts Digital proofing Power tool switches Chokes Medical diagnostics Sound mixing Traffic control equipment Digital visual interface products Vertical drain membranes and radiant barriers Cabinet power systems Wall track systems DIP switches Resistor networks Thermostats Electrical transformers High-performance RF/microwave antennas Lighting for public services Video cables Thermal circuit breakers Video endoscopy Video cameras and video cameras for investigation Pipe Heat-tracing connectors Potassium bicarbonate-based extinguishing agents Megaphone components Calculators Institutional can liners Vibration sensors Wafer gear Varactors Coaxial cables Patient monitoring cables Drop cloths Alarms for hazardous areas Power splitters Chassis components Stormwaze (water level measurement) Card readers with web-based authentication Printer cable assemblies Engineering services Amusement machine components Disposable manual resuscitators (Ambu bags) and resuscitator gas installations Patch panels Airport lighting systems Soldering equipment Long-haul, transoceanic cable systems Entry modules Microsurgical needles and sutures Laser marking Laser cutting harness design software Automotive components Computer-assisted design services Porcelain disc insulators Flex and rigid circuits Diagnostic equipment for internal organs Diagnostic and stress testing Landscape plastic sheeting Rechargeable car flashlights Memory card receptacles Spirometry systems Water treatment facilities Stormwater backflow prevention backflow prevention Power magnetics Exhausters Ultraviolet disinfection systems Moisture analysis equipment Flange gaskets with elastomeric seals and alloys Professional fire department hardware Custom sterilizable cable assemblies Skin effect trace systems Dental dressings and sutures Pex for lawn and garden irrigation Tape measures Flame detectors Ribbon cables Carpet backing Parallel groove clamps Graphic arts tape Extended coverage fire sprinkler heads Hand pumps Clean water for monitoring Satellite radio and digital audio systems Jacket compounds Galvanized steel armor with PVC jackets Irrigation pumps Utility cabinets Cycloacrylate Taper gaskets Adhesives Large-screen video projectors Eye pads Arterial extension sets Paper mill wraps Fence framework Distribution panels Continuous timers Protective breathing equipment or Special purpose spiral antennas Automatic pick, place and press Power toggle switches Fiber-optic connectors Veterinary medical products Bypass valves Carbon dioxide gas transmitters Specialty chemicals Rainfall gauges Alarms for motor vehicles Water sampling and analysis Fingerprint identification Mobile security systems Cable ties Firefighting flares Multiplier diodes Fireproof cables Drum core magnetics Audio receivers Flexible exhaust connectors Isolators and circulators Magnet valve termination machines Dual hybrid Static measuring equipment Hand-held radios Cable management accessories Steam-tracing products Extrusion laminating Parking deck PVC jacketed metal clad cable Factory automation cables Steelwork fixings Airport construction management Instrument winterization Corton balls Pipe for recreational equipment Self-adhesive cable clips Multi-pair high flexibility cables Fixed cable termination adapters Butterfly valves Portable memory Components for CD recorders and players Telemetry systems Audio production services Integrated molding/plating technology Telephone systems Safety goggles Reverse cutting sutures Decorative shields Temperature and pressure gauges Commercial-quality steel tubing Laser diodes Temperature sensors Connection droppers Dry-erase marker boards Feminine hygiene products Storage tanks Analgesics First aid kits Thermal controls Computer-assisted surgery Power modules Subminiature D connectors Front-connected sockets Digital attenuators Automated teller machine components Spring pin components Assemblies Control panels Wet pipe sprinkler systems Alarm verification Security keypads Pain management products Helical gears Roadway and tunnel management systems Printed circuit terminals Galvanized round signposts Rocker and paddle switches Microwave components Roof and gutter heating cables Arson detection Voice amplifiers Fall arrest systems High-voltage connectors Power entry modules Custom broadband networks Steel threadable sprinkler pipe Accounting software Ultrasound cable assemblies Protective clothing for emergency workers Flare launchers Dry pipe systems Cable tie guns Broadband amplifiers Rectangular heavy-duty connectors Discharge devices Ventilation dampers Electromagnetic flow readers Laser components Advanced composites Cable connectors Adhesive covers Flat steel plates Elastomeric connectors Passive fire protection hardware Singulation systems Electrosurgical devices Coffee service kits Automotive radar sensors Electrical metallic tubing compression connectors and couplers Intercommunication devices Customized valves Dry pipe valves Flexible hoses Curing ovens Insulated ground metal chandeliers Digital satellite radio antennas Perimeter detection window protection systems Anemometers Cosmetic surgery needles Flexible non-metallic conduit Supply cylinder assemblies Alarm communication systems Identification products Flexible piping equipment Rayon balls Dedicated fiber pair monitoring Hardened and tempered steel strip floor inlays Interior motion detectors Floor-mounted points Specialty electrodes Alcohol traps Fire sprinkler monitoring systems Thermochromic color-changing ink Food service chains Tissue cutting sutures Carbon steels Flange adaptors PVC conduit and fittings Button battery holder connectors Carbon monoxide protection Environmental data management Intrusion detector switches Biometric Frequency response analyzers Thyristor surge protectors Substations Extinguishing powders Contactless position sensors Electrosurgical generators Hospital blankets Modems and relays Terminal blocks Painter's plastic Industrial-grade trash bags Signal transducer cable harnesses DIN rail mount sockets Taper pin automatic band filters Jacketed cable Deep-sea cable installations Computer-printable cards Mechanical connectors Artic fire sprinklers Front and rear rectifiers for wireless applications Seal-off devices Components for street lighting Fuel dispensing systems Gaffers tape Arterial extension sets Pipe freeze thermal controls Infrastructure antennas Flanged channel posts Intelligent fuses Cardiac blankets Battery connection cable assemblies Free-height connectors Power relays Custom-printed retail shelf labels Medical packaging Digital signage Street metal fabrication Oxygen therapy products Extension cables Liquid bandages Very high-density cable interconnection assemblies Liquid chromatography systems Self-adhesive cable clips Extrusion heat sinks Facility management Lithium batteries Hazardous chemical spill control Vandal-proof photocount systems HDTV antennas Inflatable seals Pharmaceutical LNA amplifiers Resettable devices Distribution compression connectors Specialty polymers Pre-amplifiers Electromechanical relays Cathodic protection Input/output cable assemblies Electrical conduit Videocassette recorder components Disinfectants Filtered modular jacks Hydrologic and hydrographic services General purpose valves Pipe stream harsh environment connectors Recycling collection bins Surgical catheters Floor fixings Semiconductor switches Custom heat sinks Delineator posts Medical and surgical sponges Signature capture devices Coplanar connectors Terminal clamps Reversible hydraulic power packs Structural steel tubing for greenhouses Rheostats Germicidal ultraviolet lamps Biomedical engineering Hydraulic controls Aluminum auto parts Composite station post insulators Codeine phosphate Heavy duty starter/battery lugs and connectors Scan converters Couplers Thermal grease Helical rotor pumps Sirens Battery interconnection systems for portable electronics Light rail transportation design and engineering Automotive semiconductor and magnetic sensors Custom-printed theatrical admission tickets Medical fluid warming systems Ratcheted crimp tools Inspection microscopes Medical temperature management Power supply distribution units Satellite cables Video endoscopy Digital transmitters Automatic sensors Greenhouse covering Signal PC board relays Microribbon connectors Abrasives Decontamination management services Flocculators Aircraft hangars Spacers and dampers Finite element analysis Delinquent purpose connectors Wire and cable identification systems Environmental remediation Markers Fire detection systems Aerospace engine parts Cassette recorders GPS receivers High-frequency connectors Printed circuit boards Wire wrap Extractors Residential concealed fire sprinklers Customized chemicals Telecommunications Frequency synthesizers Precision time clocks Benchtop cut-and-strip machines High-power pulsed laser diodes De-icing thermal controls Flexible steel conduit Steel lugs Energy management consulting Roadway and tunnel construction management Battery terminals Surface skimmers World's largest producer of acetaminophen Interactive video surveillance systems Memory sockets Time delay relays and sensors Floor plates Laser-engraved markers Water motor alarms Multipurpose filters for emission control in high-noise industrial environments Switchgear and wire identification materials Brake master cylinders Insulated lunch bags Plug valves Capacitors Institutional voice evacuation systems Twisted-pair cables Gaseous clean rooms Undersea fiber-optic telecommunications Components for DVD players Special hazard protection products Electrosurgical pencils Special shelving and partitions Holiday lighting controls Pneumatic cylinders for aluminum smelting Cartridge heaters Electronic article surveillance systems Integrated antenna systems Power transistors GPS components Components for home entertainment systems Deluge valves and accessories Perforated telescopic steel tubing Cathode ray tubes Theft, fire, and access control security systems Product disinfection Grating systems Current differential protection relays Scalpels Flood warning systems Computer-printable labels Hose racks Blind-mate hot plugs Antimicrobial dispensers Ruggedized transmitter/receiver modules Safety glasses Composite tension insulators Power cable assemblies for electrosurgical devices Aluminum conduit Skin care products Barricade support legs Electrostatic testing and coating Alkaline batteries Hospital communication systems Cable cutters Video monitors Amplitude/phase-tracking DF antennas Digital indicators Steelwork connection products Rail de-icing systems Hot-rolled steel coils Combustible gas leak detectors Fiberglass support systems and fasteners Shingle and roof underlayments Pitchers Backup power during blackouts Residential and commercial awning framework Aircraft power systems Transmission line arrestors Edge emitting LEDs Gigabit cables Hypodermic syringes Epoxies Firefighting axes Ultrasonic surgical systems Clean room equipment Ice cream sealing wraps Flex film systems Seance-qualified components Airport runways and terminals Overvoltage protective relays Identification labeling Water treatment for irrigation Switch mode power supplies Supermarket packaging Actuation products Premises cabling Attic fire sprinklers High-speed radio frequency circuits Induction loop amplifiers Liquid crystal display pipe Lasers Bonded heatsink assemblies Patchcords Heat detectors Resin-reinforced fiberglass tubing Caster power magnetics Electronic chemicals Delineator posts Signal heat shrink tubing Air filtration Digital video management systems Food bags Surface wave touchscreens Bacteria filters Dry pipe fire sprinkler valves Wash presses Lightning protectors High-power transistor modules Carbon and silver pastes Flat face flanges Geotextiles Laser-based sensors Insulation jackets Recording charts and markers Steel tubing for automotive components and fittings Welding branch outlets Composite wire Gaskets Automotive twin pack relays Multi-conductor network cables Travel mugs Boiler tubing for Mobile phone interconnections Spark suppressor housings Coated fabrics Forestry tools GPS antennas Internal storage interconnects Reprographics Electrical metal mounting Telecom and signal relays Weatherproofing Portable oxygen units Intrusion alarm detection devices Lighting cable Floodlights for high-security areas Intuitive alarm systems Modulators Joy sticks Barricade tapes Counters and timers Electronic crowd controlling queue systems Fire hose reel cabinets Keypads Double and quad-ridge waveguide Laboratory benches Aerospace ground power and industrial high-performance connectors Extreme temperature flexible metal conduit High speed RF modules Circuit protection devices Heavy-duty commercial applicators IF amplifiers Automobile battery disconnect switch relays Lecterns and podiums Fabric maintenance Harness adaptors Low noise

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the streets of Bath for Amnesty International, handing out pamphlets and soliciting funds. Mufti accompanied her a few times, but out of friendship rather than a deep sense of the issues involved.

At the age now of nearly twenty-two, she was glad to finish with her formal studies. She worked briefly as a cub reporter, and realized that journalism did not appeal to her. In 1981, almost on a whim, she took a job as an assistant researcher in the Middle East department of Amnesty International, without suspecting that the position might define her life. The man who hired her told me recently that he chose her because of her fluency in Arabic and her clear declarative writing. That's about how she remembers it too. She did not even have an opinion about capital punishment—opposition to which constitutes the unyielding core of the human-rights movement worldwide. She did have charitable inclinations, and so was glad enough to be associated with an outfit like Amnesty International. Mostly, though, she just wanted to stay in London, and needed a job.

Recently, while serving on hiring panels, she has been struck by the focus and preparation of current aspirants—their carefully planned summer jobs, internships, and academic tracks, all leading to some hoped-for career in human rights. Such a career can be a big thing, full of power and prestige, and perhaps even well enough paid, since by now

the human-rights movement has grown up a lot. In contrast, when Mufti began, human-rights activism occupied an apparently marginal position on the political stage, and just a few years before had been naturally confused with Vietnam-era pacifism or with various forms of voguish rebellion that had proved easy for governments to discount or shove aside. Such an assessment seriously underestimated a movement that beneath its youthful appearance had tapped into the mainstream of at least 200 years of Western ethics and political thought, and that in Amnesty International already possessed something of a secular church—a large and effectively bureaucratized organization that was sustained by a tithing membership and armed with universalistic certainties. Its influence, however, would become apparent only with time, and most of the people who worked within it, like Hania Mufti herself, were unpretentious about the job.

Amnesty International's mandate by then was expanding beyond a narrow concern for political prisoners to include the full range of governmental abuses. The work consisted of two parts—first the gathering of information from varied sources, and second, after due analysis and verification, the writing of reports that could be used by the membership in grassroots campaigns. Mufti was given a typical portfolio of several Middle Eastern countries, ranging from relatively open Gulf states, where perhaps some progress could be made, to Syria, which was totally closed, harshly repressive, and for human-rights workers a really hard case. Iraq was considered to be the hardest case of all, and quite impossible to change. It would soon be added to her list.

MALE VOICES, FROM BELOW

Three men repainting the kitchen under my study
never weary of talking, that plaintive baritone
of sports commentary: who should
have been traded for whom, and who
isn't worth a dime of his salary. Oh,
the monotony, not sublime, of the male—
the ceaseless thrust, the voiced aggression
toward a world of imagined malfeasance!

Couldn't the species manage without these clowns?
With an ovary-activating device,
say, installed in beauty parlors?
A trio of women would babble beneath me
like shivering leaves, like sighing wavelets;
I wouldn't understand a blessed word.

—JOHN UPDIKE

John Updike has written seven collections of poetry, numerous books of short fiction and criticism, and twenty-one novels, of which the most recent, Villages, was published last fall.

In September of 1980 Iraq invaded Iran, sending six army divisions across the border. Iranian defenses were light at first, but Saddam kept his forces from advancing far, because he intended only to consolidate gains along the border. This turned out to be difficult to do. The following spring Iran launched a bloody counteroffensive that pushed much of Saddam's army back into Iraq, where most of the fighting took place during the remaining seven years of largely static war.

Ultimately, perhaps a million people died. In 1982 Iran launched a major offensive toward the southern city of Basra, using human waves of young, heavily indoctrinated believers seeking paradise through *jihad*. Iraq responded with chemical weapons. Initially the weapons contained only tear gas (lethal enough against boys without protection on battlefields swept by machine-gun fire), but by the following year, 1983, Iraqi ambitions had escalated, and Iraqi forces had begun to deploy deadly chemicals. The weapons seem to have been made in Iraq of substances imported from abroad. They included sarin, cyanide, tabun, and mustard gas. Together they formed a category of weapon that had long been outlawed by the Geneva Conventions, but whose



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use by the Iraqis—despite official denials—was hardly a secret. In fact, Iraq repeatedly tried to intimidate Iranian forces with open declarations of its intent to gas them, and at the height of the war issued a statement that “the invaders should know that for every harmful insect there is an insecticide capable of annihilating it, whatever their number, and Iraq possesses this annihilation insecticide.” It was an accurate enough description of the weaponry. Some of the poison gases that Iraq used did smell sweet—like insecticide or rotting apples, according to survivors. Meanwhile, because Iraq’s enemy, theocratic Iran, had become a pariah state, the world looked delicately away.

Iraq’s reliance on chemical weapons was well known in Washington, D.C., where monitoring of the war at one point indicated almost daily use. Saddam’s suppression of minority groups and political dissidents was also well known. U.S. diplomatic relations with Iraq had been broken off in 1967, as a result of tensions over the Palestinian conflict and, specifically, the Six-Day War. But of course times had changed. Ronald Reagan had won the U.S. presidency. Saddam Hussein was a distasteful character, but he was seen now to be fighting the good fight against the radicals of Tehran. In 1982 the State Department quietly removed Iraq from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. Donald Rumsfeld,

In July of 1983 Iraqi forces entered Kurdish resettlement camps and arrested 8,000 men and teenage boys of a prominent and rebellious clan called the Barzanis. They were machine-gunned to death and buried.

who had served as secretary of defense under Gerald Ford, arrived in Baghdad in 1983 on the first of two trips as a special envoy. His purpose was to open a dialogue—which to the Iraqis meant to make friends. Rumsfeld met with the foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, and touched on mutual concerns, including oil exports, pipeline construction, and especially the need to defeat the theocracy in Iran. Near the end of the meeting Rumsfeld mentioned Iraq’s violation of human rights and its use of chemical weapons as troublesome, but made it obvious that such worries would not interfere with the rapprochement under way. In a separate meeting with Saddam Hussein he did not mention these issues, and kept the encounter positive. Diplomatic relations were restored in 1984.

The United States never sold weapons to Iraq, but it allowed for the sale of dual-use equipment like heavy trucks and helicopters, which were presumed to be of help to the war effort, and it shared information, probably pertaining

to Iranian capabilities and to the position of enemy forces along the front lines. Beginning in 1983, it also provided agricultural and manufacturing credits worth more than \$500 million annually, which created a powerful pro-Iraq lobby in Congress. That lobby worked throughout the 1980s to ensure that the U.S.-Iraqi relationship would remain unaffected by Iraq’s domestic policies. Appearances were maintained, with occasional actions or statements indicating official displeasure with Iraq’s use of chemical weapons. In March of 1984, for instance, the State Department prevented the shipment by an American firm of 22,000 pounds of phosphorus fluoride—a common ingredient of chemical weapons—that ostensibly was to be used for the manufacture of insecticide, and the United States issued an official condemnation of Iraq’s chemical-weapons program. This message, however, was soon diluted by apologetic explanations of American political necessities, and by additional back-channel assurances of support. The Iraqis shrugged off the public condemnation and moved ahead with their weapons program.

Chances are they would have moved ahead under any circumstances. Such was their taste for chemical weapons that they soon began to use them not only against Iranian forces but also against their own population in the north. That use was embedded in the long-standing anti-guerrilla campaign in Kurdistan, which was pursued by Baghdad with renewed vigor starting in 1983, not because of American diplomatic maneuverings, which had hardly yet begun, but because of the fight-to-the-finish quality of the Iran-Iraq War, to which it was inextricably linked. Simply put, Kurdish guerrillas had sided with Iran—and the Baathist regime, unable to distinguish between combatants, sympathizers, and uninvolved civilians, responded in certain areas by trying to kill them all.

As a foretaste of what was to come, in July of 1983 government forces entered Kurdish resettlement camps and arrested 8,000 men and teenage boys of a prominent and rebellious clan known as the Barzanis. The prisoners were chosen not for what they had done but simply for family association and gender. They were loaded into trucks and driven south into the vastness of the Iraqi desert, where, it is presumed, they were machine-gunned to death and buried. Not one of them was ever seen again.

The following year Hania Mufti was given the Iraq brief at Amnesty International. It was a difficult and thankless assignment of the sort generally handed from one newcomer to the next. But Mufti by then had grasped the seriousness of this work—its consequences for people on the ground—and she applied herself to the problems in Iraq with persistence and intelligence. Penetrating the walls of secrecy around the regime was not easy. Travel to Iraq was impossible, as was safe communication by telephone or mail, and London itself was full of Iraqi spies. Remembering those times, and the difficulties involved in finding



and protecting good sources, Mufti recently said to me, “There were people who traveled out of Iraq, who were in a position to know [about Baathist abuses] because of their rank within the political system, but who were able to transmit information to people like us when abroad only at great risk. The usual sources were either the victims themselves who were able to escape, or their families, or people they were in touch with abroad—political parties, sometimes journalists, but rarely. And also other eyewitnesses or former detainees. It was difficult to assess the truth of many things that we were hearing about, because of our inability to do any research on the ground, and our inability even to contact people from a distance, because it would endanger them.”

She had to gather the information, in other words, largely from Iraqi refugees—the same people, generally, who in their fear and hatred of the Baathist regime later led the U.S. and British governments to overestimate the military threat posed by Saddam Hussein. Unlike those governments, the human-rights organizations, deeply concerned with maintaining their credibility, proved to be shrewd and reliable analysts, capable of intellectual detachment, and steady under pressure. I asked Mufti if she had heard many stories that had turned out to be untrue. She said, “It happens. You have to see how consistent the story is with others you have heard. You develop a sense of how to measure a story. But in a country like Iraq, where the stories you heard were so fantastic, sometimes I did doubt

my own ability to tell truth from fiction.” She paused, and shook her head. “What we ended up writing represented a small fraction of what we were hearing about. Sometimes the problem was that we couldn’t verify the information to the minimum level necessary to go with it on the public record. For example, we couldn’t verify the numbers of executions in any given incident, or in some period, and so we’d have to qualify the information and say ‘hundreds’ or ‘dozens’ of executions, or whatever. Or sometimes we’d be deliberately vague in order not to disclose the source. And it was certainly rare to be able to mention the names of victims, because even if they were already dead, the regime would go after their families. We would have to consult with the sources about the consequences of going public with names, and we would say, ‘It’s your call,’ and most of them would say, ‘No, don’t mention names.’ And then it became difficult to go further with it—and when we did go public, the Iraqi government would challenge us, and say, ‘These are general allegations. How can we refute them when you don’t mention names?’ So it was always a Catch-22. But is it better to keep quiet because you can’t mention the names, or is it better to raise the issue even though you are not able to take it a step further?” Amnesty answered that question case by case.

Throughout the 1980s, the London staffers said every year about Iraq, “Now, this year, let’s finally *get* the bastards,” and of course every year they did not. They worked resolutely nonetheless, publishing the accounts that Mufti and

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her supervisors judged to be real, no matter how fantastic they seemed. In 1985, for instance, in a report titled "Torture in Iraq," along with a standard litany of police methods (the beatings, shockings, burnings, stretchings, cuttings, breakings, and penetrations that were ordinary for this regime), they went public with information they had received about a bizarre plasma-harvesting program, under which prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison were killed by being strapped down and drained rapidly of their blood. The writing was typical of Mufti's early work.

Case Number 5: An Iraqi doctor of medicine testified to Amnesty International in 1984 that he witnessed and was forced to participate in the taking of blood from prisoners which resulted in their death. According to his testimony, he was aware of approximately 1000 such operations having taken place during 1982 and 1983. The operations are reportedly directly controlled by Security Headquarters (Ri'asat al-Mukhabarat) in Baghdad, and carried out with the co-operation of a prison director and personnel of the Blood Bank Institute in Baghdad. The following are extracts from his testimony:

"At Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad ... where I was told there are ... donors who want to donate blood ... the prison doctor took me to the prison hospital. I found there two persons in a shock state, immobile, and who exhibited air hunger with a rapid thready pulse and cold, clammy skin. The prison doctor told me that those two prisoners were criminals and that he bled them under the influence of hypnotic drugs in order to benefit from their blood before they are executed. This doctor also told me that he has directives from Security Headquarters to use this method with important political persons so as to give the reason for the subsequent death as 'heart failure.' The directive also applies to criminals sentenced to death."

On another occasion at the same prison: "The prison doctor ... told me that he will bleed 3 persons and asked me to help him. When I refused, he told me the Security Headquarters demanded that this operation must be done under my supervision and that if I refused, they will jail me."

Mufti's report continued with the Iraqi doctor's observations of the effects.

"1. He becomes acutely anemic and loses consciousness, due to insufficient blood supply to the brain. The state of unconsciousness is treated by feeding the person with salt water in a quantity equal to the amount of blood taken. This procedure prevents the immediate death of the person.

"2. Despite the fact that the body is compensated for the loss of liquids, the amount of haemoglobin remains very low (2-4 ml per 100 mm), which is insufficient for the functioning of the vital organs.

"3. As a result of this and after 3-5 days, the heart fails and the person suffers from a sharp drop in the heart's activities, which leads to a heart attack and death. Diagnosis shows death by heart attack, and the families of the dead person are officially informed of his death due to this reason."

The report then turned to the comments of an independent hematologist in Great Britain, who wrote that the observed symptoms were consistent with the rapid loss of

more than 2.5 liters of blood, five times the quantity of a normal blood donation, or approximately 50 percent of the human body's supply. The hematologist concluded with measured understatement.

"The [Iraqi] doctor states that the collection of blood during the past three years before he left Iraq was non-voluntary on many occasions. If this statement is true, then it is not in accord with the directives of the World Health Organization or any reputable international or national body involved with blood donation and transfusion."

But what was the World Health Organization, or any other reputable body, going to do about it? The answer, quite obviously, was nothing at all. This was the frustration with the Iraq brief. The work required not only an even temperament but also inner strength, and a belief in the inherent value of creating an accurate, long-term record of these crimes.

Mufti's boss at the time, a veteran human-rights investigator named Hanny Megally, once told me, "I remember that in a lot of cases where other people might have given up when they hit a hurdle, or when it looked like you couldn't do something for one reason or another, she would keep trying and looking for another way until she could make it work. And one of the areas where we really saw that was in helping the refugees who were coming out of Iraq." He meant not just providing temporary financial support, for which Amnesty had some limited funds, but, more important, helping escaped Iraqis to win the right to settle as political refugees.

I said, "Helping them in London?"

He said, "All over the place—in France, or in Denmark, or in Sweden, or in Germany, or wherever. The Amnesty sections in those countries would contact the International Secretariat in London, saying, 'These people have arrived. We're trying to help them. They're talking about being arrested during a certain period. Does that tally with your information?' And Hania would painstakingly go back through her research." He returned to the subject later. "Hania just got very caught up. Iraq became her passion, in a way, because it was the hardest nut to crack."

The same was true for the human-rights movement itself. Amnesty International had been tracking Iraq for years, and refusing to give up no matter how great people's frustration at the lack of progress there. Now, like the worst tyrants, Saddam Hussein seemed to be growing more dangerous with age. Amnesty was in a position to understand that this was no longer just another repressive Middle Eastern government at play. It did not call for international justice, but it pursued its investigations relentlessly, in ever greater depth, and produced a body of work that alerted and persuaded others. The subsequent involvement of American organizations, and particularly of Human Rights Watch, turned out to be important. The

Americans were energetic, rich, and ambitious. With their addition something like critical mass would be achieved.

The Iraqi government helped too; its depredations were becoming more brutal and brazen. In March of 1988, during a massive offensive against guerrillas in the north, the Iraqi military mounted a chemical attack against Halabja, a Kurdish town of 60,000 people (many of them refugees) near the border with Iran. Halabja had been infiltrated by at least some Iranian forces that may or may not have been in town when, in the afternoon on March 16, Iraqi aircraft began to drop chemical bombs. The bombs seem to have contained mustard gas, and perhaps the nerve agent sarin. The sweet fog seeped through the neighborhoods on the north side of town, and sank into the bomb shelters where many of the citizens were hiding. The citizens tried to flee, and they perished by the hundreds and then thousands in the streets, often in family clusters. Ultimately, according to one estimate, 4,000 died—and perhaps twice that many. Though such figures pale in comparison to those of the surrounding war, the chemical attack on Halabja still stands as the largest atrocity perpetrated by the Baathist regime against its own civilians in a single day. The Iranians exploited it adroitly, by flying in journalists to photograph and describe the death scenes. The news went around briefly, and although for most people the episode remained distant and abstract (Who are these Kurds, and by the way, where is Iraq?), nonetheless, somewhere in the collective consciousness of the world, Halabja lodged and stayed.

An obscure point of history that remains important, however, to Hania Mufti is that Amnesty International did not join in the immediate condemnation of the Halabja massacre, because of the possibility that Iranian forces had indeed been present not merely in the vicinity but inside the town, making this bombing arguably a military matter. Mufti was convinced otherwise, and believed that Amnesty needed to take a stand, but she was overruled, and had no choice but to remain silent—an abdication, as she saw it, that she found extremely distressing, and does to this day. She was moving beyond the church that had formed her, yet she believed in that church, and recognized that without it she alone could do little for the Iraqi people, who in some sense had become her charges.

On the ground the situation kept getting worse. In August of 1988, after months of reports of military actions in the northern mountains, word reached the outside world that up to 100,000 Iraqi Kurds were fleeing across the border into Turkey, seeking safety from oncoming forces. The Turkish government had its own problems with Kurdish separatism, and was fighting a vicious counterinsurgency campaign that over the years caused tens of thousands of deaths and major displacements of Kurdish peasants. Nonetheless, Turkey gave shelter to the fleeing Iraqi Kurds, grudgingly, in hastily assembled camps.

It was in those isolated camps along the border with

Iraq that Turkish doctors mentioned to the press that many refugees exhibited symptoms of having come under chemical attack. The victims had been blinded and burned, and had difficulty breathing. Some reported that their neighbors and families had been killed by gas. But without reporters on the scene, as they had been in Halabja, the realities remained obscure. After the initial few days the Turkish doctors suddenly grew silent—the result, Mufti believes, of a decision by Turkish authorities to suppress any further commotion about the Kurds.

Several weeks later Mufti flew with a team of Amnesty investigators to the walled city of Diyarbakir, in southeastern Turkey, on her first trip into the Iraqi theater of operations. She and the others augmented the efforts under way by an American group, Physicians for Human Rights, and they managed to drive to some of the border camps, despite roadblocks and attempts by suspicious officials to keep them away. They returned to Diyarbakir, to a hospital where some of the refugees had been taken, but they were prevented from visiting the patients. When they spoke to doctors there, they were given inconclusive descriptions of the injuries. Mufti returned to London and issued a statement that mentioned the possibility of chemical attacks against civilians but for lack of evidence did not pursue the subject.

Mufti and Stover were taken to the sites of several mass graves. Only days after the fall of the regime, the sites were undisturbed—but they were also unprotected, and vulnerable to being dug up by relatives of the victims.

It took another several years for the truth to come out: what the Turkish doctors had seen (and Mufti had just missed) was evidence of one of the great crimes of the late twentieth century—an Iraqi counterinsurgency campaign that had exceeded all bounds, and indeed had gone quite insane. That campaign was the Iraqi equivalent of the Final Solution—a carefully planned “cleansing” operation, known in Arabic as the “*Anfal*” (a Koranic reference meaning “spoils of war”), whose purpose was to eliminate the rural population from which the Kurdish rebels were drawn, and to empty the most troublesome valleys, by killing or arresting the inhabitants, razing their villages, and creating permanent free-fire zones where not even livestock would be allowed to live. It lasted for seven months, from February through September of 1988, and was led by Saddam’s special envoy, Ali Hassan al-Majid, who during its course earned his name as Chemical Ali. Al-Majid set up a bureaucratic structure to carry out the campaign, creating

an extensive documentary record of directives, lists, and interoffice communications, which ultimately were captured and will form the core of his prosecution on charges of genocide. In a directive to relevant military commands (later published by Human Rights Watch) he wrote,

1. All the villages in which subversives, agents of Iran and similar traitors to Iraq are still to be found shall be regarded as out of bounds for security reasons;
 2. They shall be regarded as operational zones that are strictly out of bounds to all persons and animals and in which the troops can open fire at will, without any restrictions, unless otherwise instructed by our Bureau;
 3. Travel to and from these zones, as well as all agricultural, animal husbandry and industrial activities shall be prohibited and carefully monitored by all the competent agencies within their respective fields of jurisdiction;
 4. The corps commanders shall carry out random bombardments using artillery, helicopters and aircraft, at all times of the day or night in order to kill the largest number of persons present in those prohibited zones, keeping us informed of the results;
 5. All persons captured in those villages shall be detained and interrogated by security services and those between the ages of 15 and 70 shall be executed after any useful information has been obtained from them, of which we should be duly notified;
 6. Those who surrender to the governmental or Party authorities shall be interrogated by the competent agencies for a maximum period of three days, which may be extended to ten days if necessary, provided that we are notified of such cases. If the interrogation requires a longer period of time, approval must be obtained from us by telephone or telegraph or through comrade Taher [Tawfiq] al-Ani ...
- For information and action within your respective fields of jurisdiction. Keep us informed.

[Signed]
Comrade
Ali Hassan al-Majid
Member of the Regional Command
Secretary General of the Northern Bureau

This directive prefigured a sustained attack on Kurdistan during which entire valley complexes were cordoned off, one after the other, and then assaulted by conventional ground forces, and by aircraft dropping chemical bombs. Ali Hassan al-Majid had perhaps 200,000 soldiers and security men at his disposal. Over the course of the spring and summer they did exactly what Ali Hassan al-Majid had told them to do.

Investigators from Human Rights Watch later collected testimony from some of the few detainees to have survived the mass executions of captured villagers, and pieced together stories from those moments of hell, which were published in 1993 in a lengthy report called *Genocide in Iraq*. Here is one episode, based on the testimony of three Kurdish survivors:

With the bulldozers in the lead, the new nine-vehicle caravan drove west along a bumpy paved road that ran parallel to the Euphrates. In the fading light, the silhouettes of date palms fringed the road to the right. One of the prisoners in Ozer's bus was weak and faint, and a prisoner who spoke a little Arabic begged the new driver for water. This was not allowed, the driver answered. "Let the man die," he said. "You are all men of Jalal Talabani."

After half an hour, the convoy turned right on to a dirt road. Ahead the prisoners saw only desert and darkness. Some began to pray, muttering the *Shehadeh*—"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet ..." Remembered images of his family flashed through Ibrahim's mind. By now all the men were weeping, asking what they had done to deserve such a fate, kissing each other's beards and exchanging words of forgiveness, as is the Muslim custom among those who know they are about to die.

It was almost dark, and the meaning of time had begun to dissolve. Ozer thought that the sealed buses traveled along this rutted desert track for about ten minutes; Omar estimated that the journey took from 15–30 minutes; Ibrahim said that it felt more like an hour. Suddenly, the bus lurched to a stop, bogged down in the deep sand. The vehicle behind, the last one in the convoy, swerved to the right to avoid it and got stuck as well. Through the wire-mesh screen in the sliding door, Ozer could see that the three remaining buses, as well as the two Landcruisers and one of the two bulldozers, had driven on ahead. In the half-light he could just make out the tops of the vehicles bobbing as they crested a rise and dipped into a shallow depression in the desert a quarter of a mile or so ahead. The driver turned off the engine.

Since the final turn on to the dirt road, there had no longer been any room for denial or wishful thinking. The men knew exactly what lay in store for them, and they began to plan feverishly, speaking in Kurdish in the knowledge that neither the guard nor the driver could understand them. When the guards arrived to kill them, they would put up a struggle. "Even if only one of the thirty-five survived, it was worth the try," said Ibrahim.

In the sudden quiet, the prisoners could hear the steady chatter of gunfire from automatic weapons, and the churning, whining sound of bulldozer engines. After perhaps twenty minutes, the guns fell silent. Out of the darkness, a bulldozer lumbered toward them and took up position behind the bus. Gears screaming, it tried several times to push the vehicle out of the sand, but the front wheels only dug in deeper. Next it tried to lift the bus out by its rear end, and Ozer thought the driver meant to tip them headlong into a trench, bus and all. At last, the bulldozer managed to drag the stalled vehicle out frontwards. The driver climbed down from his cab, exhausted by the effort, and took out his hip flask. The prisoners begged for water, banging on the windowless steel walls. The driver drank deeply and jeeringly held up his flask as the rest of the liquid trickled away into the sand.

It was now 7:30 p.m., and quite dark. The men were just able to tell the time by squinting at a watch that a prisoner from the village of Khidr Beg had somehow managed to hang on to at Topzawa. Twice more, there were volleys of gunfire and the sound of screams. After about half an hour, the two Landcruisers returned, with the officer

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who had joined the convoy at the bridge over the Euphrates. The driver of Ozer's bus climbed down from his seat, walked around to the back of the vehicle and turned off the overhead light in the rear compartment. Having done this, he went back to his cab and turned his headlights on full-beam. As Ozer and his companions whimpered in panic, the three dozen occupants of the second stalled bus were dragged into the pool of light, and a uniformed firing squad opened up on them with Kalashnikovs and pistols. When the firing stopped, the men were dragged into a freshly dug pit. Ozer noticed that some of the bodies were still moving. Only one busload of prisoners now remained.

The men's plan was this: When the first guard entered the bus to take the prisoners away, the strongest of them would overpower him, grab his weapon and try to wedge the door open. Most of the men were too weak to assist, but Ozer, Omar and a handful of others watched the sliding partition door. Ibrahim waited fearfully at the back, ready to bolt if he could. Through the grille, Ozer could see that two guards with pistols had taken up position on either side of the door; another, who carried a Kalashnikov stood by the driver's seat; while a fourth man, also armed with a Kalashnikov, guarded the outer door, with one foot planted on the step and the other on the ground.

After a few moments, one of the uniformed guards, a burly man with a thick neck, removed the padlock and slid back the connecting door to the driver's compartment. As soon as he did so, a prisoner named Salam lunged forward to strike him. But a second guard in the driver's cab opened fire with his pistol, killing Salam instantly, and slammed the door shut again. Ozer heard the first guard, apparently an officer, declare that he would execute the prisoners one by one.

Seizing command of the situation, Ozer issued his instructions. When the guards took the first prisoner out, Omar would throw his weight against the rail of the sliding door to prevent it from being closed. The other men would hurl themselves into the breach. And that is essentially what happened. The burly guard returned, pulled one prisoner into the open doorway and tied a white cloth around his eyes as a blindfold. As he turned to drag the man away, half a dozen prisoners rushed forward. Several of them laid hold of the shoulder strap of the guard's Kalashnikov, while he kept a firm grip of the stock and the barrel. Ozer yelled at another prisoner to punch the officer in the face. Although the man, like everyone, was weakened by several days without food, he succeeded in landing a blow on the officer's eye. Ozer wrenched the rifle free, but the officer managed to break loose, unclip the magazine and hurl it out of the bus behind him, rendering the weapon useless.

Pouring through the open door, the prisoners cut off the escape of the guard who had been standing by the driver's seat. Gunfire erupted, and two men fell dead on top of Ozer. Another prisoner tried to leap from the bus and was also cut down. As Ozer struggled to free himself, he saw the second of the four guards—the one who had killed Salam—stagger toward him, bleeding profusely from the shoulder. The man was screaming, "Abu Saleh, come and help me!" It appeared that he had been shot by his own side. Ozer reached for the man's pistol but could not find it;

instead, he wrestled him to the ground by his injured arm, and the guard lay still, apparently unconscious. Meanwhile the soldiers or police outside continued to rake the bus with gunfire, and the men in the passenger compartment cowered under the bus seats. Bodies piled up inside the bus, and Ibrahim took a painful flesh wound in the right buttock. He was also dimly aware that he could no longer see through his right eye. In the confusion, Omar managed to wriggle under the vehicle as bullets ricocheted from it on all sides. Ozer felt his leg grazed by a flying piece of shrapnel. As he lay there, he heard a strange sound between the bursts of firing. At first he could not place it; then he realized that it was the sound of blood dripping from the bus. Almost all of his fellow prisoners were dead.

Ozer escaped by staggering away into the night, across a desert of corpse-filled trenches, until by chance he found refuge in a Kurdish resettlement camp. He was one of very few to survive that night. Altogether, Human Rights Watch estimated that 50,000 to 100,000 Kurds were killed in the *Anfal* operations, including many women and children. The operation ended (with a false amnesty) in September of 1988. Later Ali Hassan al-Majid turned over the command to his successor with an impromptu speech, during which he said, "When the amnesty was announced, I was about to get mad. But as a responsible party member I said, okay. I said, probably we will find some good ones among [the Kurds], since they are our people too. But we didn't find any. Never."

In July of 1988 Iraqi ground forces had leveled Halabja with bulldozers and dynamite. That August the eight-year Iran-Iraq War had ended in a cease-fire—a peace that was welcomed by human-rights activists, certainly, but that allowed the Baathist regime to turn increasingly to its domestic enemies. Now, in September of 1988, Mufti and others at Amnesty International felt that the repression of the Kurds in particular was so serious that an argument had to be made that world peace itself was being threatened. As Mufti herself knew, the argument did not bear close scrutiny, and was more a measure of desperation than a practical assessment of geopolitical realities. But on the basis of it Amnesty made an unprecedented approach to the United Nations Security Council, requesting emergency intervention. This was not a call for war, but it was close. The request was ignored. Similar entreaties in Washington fell on deaf ears. Mufti and her colleagues felt hemmed in. They found themselves fighting on two fronts—against the abuses of the Baathist regime, and against the great powers who, despite growing public concern over Iraqi atrocities, refused for practical reasons to get involved.

In 1989 the University of California published a book titled *Republic of Fear*, a brilliant if sometimes propagandistic examination of Saddam's unique form of totalitarianism, written by an Iraqi expatriate named Kanan Makiya, who had close ties to Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress. Makiya is a charming man, and friends with Mufti, with

whom he shared an emotional commitment to the plight of ordinary Iraqis trapped by the Baathist regime. His book was hardly noticed at first, but it was soon swept up in events when Iraq invaded Kuwait, after which it came to serve in Europe and the United States as an essential moral component in the argument for war. However unintentionally, Hania Mufti's humanitarian work did too.

Iraq attacked Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and with that single disastrous move set in motion an entirely new set of crimes for which Saddam and his lieutenants will stand trial. Those crimes were committed in waves, starting within Kuwait during the seven months of its occupation, then spreading to Iraq's south and beyond, and continuing to ripple for years to come.

The invasion of Kuwait took merely a day. For human-rights workers the world was suddenly stood on its head. The Great Powers had praised but long ignored their work. Now the United Nations, the United States, and the important European powers responded with all the condemnations and sanctions against Iraq that Amnesty International could have hoped for. Beyond that, a five-month military buildup began in neighboring Saudi Arabia. Within Kuwait there was resistance to the Iraqi occupation. Horror stories started to filter out, and though many were distorted for political and military reasons, taken together they indicated that the Baathist regime was treating Kuwaiti society with all the viciousness for which it was known. Indeed, having formally annexed Kuwait one week after the invasion, Iraq had named as the new province's governor none other than the architect of the *Anfal* campaign, Ali Hassan al-Majid.

During the months that followed Hania Mufti traveled to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to interview witnesses among the approximately 300,000 refugees who had fled Kuwait. She was accompanied by her boss, Hanny Megally. The work was grueling. It involved long drives between distant cities, and negotiations with soldiers and officials, just to get access to the witnesses; as usual, it also involved sorting through difficult stories of the worst sort of suffering, and yet somehow maintaining emotional distance and separating the exaggerations from the facts. Saudi Arabia in particular was burdensome for Mufti, because of the limitations placed on her as a woman there, including such petty restrictions as rules forbidding her to enter government buildings or to check into hotel rooms alone. She wore a veil. One day, while accompanied by five Saudi and Kuwaiti men, she and Megally were stopped at a checkpoint by a Saudi official who said he would have to get them written permission to proceed.

"How many are you?" the official asked.

Megally answered, "Seven."

The official looked at them and said, "No, there are only six."

Megally was confused. He said, "No, there are seven."

So the official counted them—one, two, three, four, five, six men. When he got to Mufti, he made a dismissive gesture, as if she were rubbish.

Back in London she wrote the most important report of her career to date—a meticulous eighty-two-page condemnation of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. Echoes of that condemnation will emerge in court this spring, when Ali Hassan al-Majid and others face charges as leaders of the occupation. In the introduction Mufti wrote,

Widespread abuses of human rights have been perpetrated by Iraqi forces following the invasion of Kuwait on 2 August. These include the arbitrary arrest and detention without trial of thousands of civilians and military personnel; the widespread torture of such persons in custody; the imposition of the death penalty and the extrajudicial execution of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children. In addition, hundreds of people in Kuwait remain unaccounted for, having effectively "disappeared" in detention, and many of them are feared dead ...

Amnesty International takes no position on the conflict in the Gulf, and does not condone killings and other acts of violence perpetrated by the parties to the conflict. What concerns the organization are human rights violations taking place in that context. Those violations which have been reported since 2 August are entirely consistent with abuses known to have been committed in Iraq over many years, and which have been documented by Amnesty International in its numerous reports. Iraq's policy of the brutal suppression of all forms of internal dissent continues to be implemented, and the people of Iraq remain its victims. Amnesty International has repeatedly placed such information on the public record, and regrets that until the invasion of Kuwait, the international community did not see fit to apply serious pressure in an attempt to put an end to these abuses.

The report proceeded into the details, systematically describing a reign of terror, in page after page of unflinching narrative, supported by witness statements. This, for instance, from a Kuwaiti doctor:

"On average, five or six new bodies were brought to the hospital each day. All were males and most were in their 20s. Many bore marks of torture. Judging by the bodies that I personally saw, the methods of torture being used included the extinguishing of cigarettes on the body; burning of the skin with heated metal rods; application of electricity; cutting off of the tongue and ear; gouging out of the eyes and the breaking of limbs. In most of these cases, the immediate cause of death appeared to be a single shot in the back of the head or, in a few cases, a shot in the ear or mouth. I also saw the body of a middle-aged man who appeared to have been strangled with a rope. Most of the victims were Kuwaitis, but among those whom I came across were five Egyptians and one Iranian. Some of the victims had also had their fingernails extracted, and others had swollen feet with pockets of pus as a result of being subjected to *falaga* [severe foot beatings] for prolonged periods. Some had marks around their ankles, consistent with having been suspended upside down. One had been

shot in the thigh ... One of the Egyptians I saw had been shot at point blank range in his hand, which looked as if it had been torn to pieces. Some had had their beards plucked out."

According to the information that Mufti was able to gather, the abuses were systematic. In addition to the techniques of torture described above, the investigators heard stories of other methods—of boring a hole in the leg with a drill; of castration; of tying a string around the penis and tightening it; of hammering nails into hands; of inserting bottle necks, sometimes broken, into the rectum; of pumping air into the anus, particularly of young boys; of extinguishing cigarettes in eyeballs; of burning and blinding people with acid and caustic substances; of subjecting people to extremes of heat and cold and thirst; of various forms of mock execution. Summary executions were commonplace, and for as little reason as carrying the former Kuwaiti currency, which had been officially replaced by the Iraqi dinar. Rape was widespread, and was perpetrated against women of all classes and backgrounds, but particularly against Asian maids. Westerners were being hunted, thousands were in hiding, and those who were captured were being sent to Iraq to act as human shields at military and industrial sites. The fate of young Kuwaitis suspected of resistance was worse: a pattern was established by which, after being tortured, they were driven to their homes, displayed to their families for proper identification, and then executed in the street before their families' eyes. Such cruelty defies understanding. Perhaps most shocking, the report repeated assertions by Kuwaiti doctors that amid the sporadic murders of hospital patients and the systematic looting of medical equipment, Iraqi soldiers had discarded as many as 300 premature babies in order to make off with their incubators. This turned out to be not merely implausible but simply untrue. The decision to include it was a rare misjudgment by Mufti; it weakened her work, damaged Amnesty International's reputation for careful research, and indirectly embroiled Mufti in the political controversy that followed. Fundamentally, however, it did not detract from the accuracy of the other information contained in her report.

The report was ready for release in December of 1990, at a time when the buildup of the American-led military coalition was nearly complete, and war seemed close at hand. An intense argument broke out within Amnesty International about the morality of going public with a document likely to be used to help justify a war that would be fought essentially over oil, as they saw it, and that inevitably would kill hundreds if not thousands of innocent civilians, not to mention legions of hapless Iraqi draftees. Mufti believed firmly that the report had to be issued, that the human-rights movement could not remain silent about the abuses being perpetrated, and that in any event the decision to go to war had already been made. She was

right, of course, and her argument prevailed. Sure enough, President George H.W. Bush used the report in a television interview with David Frost, during which he said that he had handed it to his wife, Barbara, and that she had read about two pages of it before saying, "I can't read any more." If true, her reaction was sane and self-protective. It is not clear whether President Bush read the entire document. He labeled the crimes it described as "primeval." Or completely modern, as the mood may be.

Mufti was in Washington, watching on television on January 16, 1991, as the air war began. Iraq responded feebly to the attack by firing a few missiles into Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saddam made bellicose noises. The ground war began six weeks later, and ended after merely four days, on February 27, 1991, with an Iraqi defeat. In a reminder of the war's original logic, the retreating troops set fire to the Kuwaiti oil fields. The American-led forces entered southern Iraq and then stopped. Mufti and her colleagues arrived in Kuwait City immediately afterward. Their purpose was primarily to document the Iraqi crimes, but they found themselves overwhelmed by an additional problem, which was the widespread Kuwaiti vengeance that was being carried out against perceived collaborators—mostly foreign. This particular pattern—of the oppressed becoming the oppressors when the tables suddenly turn—is a perpetual problem for human-rights activists, and an indication of the structural challenges that they face in their attempt to remake human behavior. Mufti and her team set to work documenting the new crimes of the former victims, and gamely soldiered on.

Their soldiering soon took them across the border into Iraq, where during the temporary weakening of Baathist control that followed the defeat in Kuwait, a violent Shiite uprising had broken out throughout the country's south. The inspiration for the uprising was an address given by President Bush in Washington just before the ground war. Bush had said, "But there's another way for the bloodshed to stop, and that is for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands, to force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside, and to comply with the United Nations resolutions, and then rejoin the family of peace-loving nations." It was a statement of fact, and reasonable enough, but in a Middle East where American strength is often confused with intent, it was taken as a promise, which it was not. Apparently the uprising started with a single small mutiny by retreating soldiers in the southern city of Basra, but it spread quickly to the long-suppressed Shiite majority, among whom ordinary citizens picked up guns and knives, and went out to slaughter the agents of the Baathist regime. Within a week most of the Shiite cities of the south had been wrested from Saddam's grasp.

Their autonomy did not last long, in part because the expected American support never materialized. Indeed, though U.S. forces were present in Iraq, they stood back and

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watched as helicopter gunships and elite troops from the Iraqi Republican Guard retook the south, using heavy and indiscriminate firepower against Shiite citizens. Ali Hassan al-Majid was again in charge. For Hania Mufti as for many Iraqis, the American passivity amounted to betrayal.

Speaking of the Shiite uprising, she recently said to me, "They were let down. Let down at a huge cost to themselves ... Those are the kinds of people whose mass graves are now being found. There was a lot of pressure from the neighboring countries, the Gulf states and others, not to go on to Baghdad. And the Americans said, 'Okay, the main aim was to get the Iraqis out of Kuwait, and that's been achieved. That's all we want. To hell with the rest of the country. To hell with the Iraqis. Whatever Saddam does to them now is nobody's concern. It becomes an internal affair.'"

"Sovereignty," I said.

"Sovereignty ... If it had been in the Americans' interest, I'm sure they would have found some legal or not-so-legal way of justifying a continuing march on to Baghdad. And at that point if they had marched on to Baghdad, for sure the Iraqi people would have thrown flowers at the soldiers. Now the Americans ask, 'Why didn't they throw flowers at us this time around?' Well, because that kind of betrayal is not easy to forget."

NOW

I read to my dog from a takeout menu
so he can sleep. When he tires
of that, I talk to him
about nothing, and when I run out
of things to say, I make up words
to a song with whatever
array of notes and breath streams in

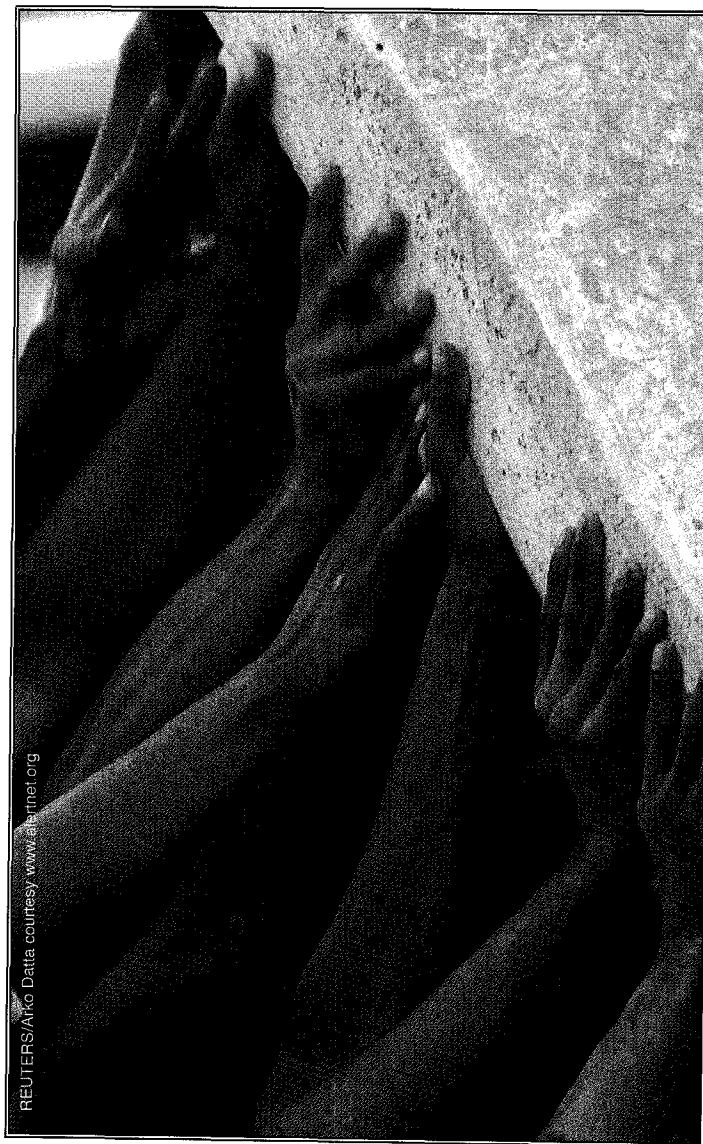
the way the clean wind did
as we rode once, and
I rolled down the window a hair
and he sat up without effort, glossy nose
in the speeding weather, eyes half closed
in the light that whizzed through his fur
like the hands of a friend
who had missed him.

—FRANNIE LINDSAY

*Frannie Lindsay's first book of poems,
Where She Always Was, received the 2004
May Swenson Award from Utah State University Press.*

Be that as it may, after three weeks the 1991 uprising was almost over, and mass arrests were under way. Suspected rebels were being tortured, shot, or in at least one instance thrown to their deaths from the heights of multi-story buildings. Thousands of Shiites were fleeing toward Saudi Arabia and across the border into Iran. Others were slipping into the vast alluvial marshes of southeastern Iraq to hide. It was at this time, toward the end of the uprising, that Mufti and her colleagues crossed the border into Iraq. Their visit lasted just a few hours. They drove to the nearest settlement, a collection of tents and ramshackle houses. The settlement was filling with people on the run from Saddam's forces, which were just to the north and approaching. For fleeing Iraqis the border to Kuwait was closed. Mufti walked through the settlement, talking to the refugees about the tactics of the conquering forces. At one point, to her surprise, a man she knew from London walked up to her; he was from a wealthy Shiite family, now on the run. He asked her quietly if she would come with him, and led her to the second floor of a makeshift building, where she found more than sixty people in hiding. Most were women, old men, and children, but some were young men—all from the sort of influential Shiite families, well connected to Iran, that Saddam at the time was gunning for. These people were terrified. For days they had been there in isolation, worried about betrayal, and afraid to speak to anyone until now. They told Mufti that they had no means of communication with the outside world, and asked her if upon her return to her Kuwaiti hotel she would telephone a mutual friend in London, to arrange for an airplane to fly them out to Iran. This she did, and perhaps the airplane did arrive, because recently in Baghdad one of them told her that she had saved their lives.

She returned exhausted to London, wrote furiously, sent off a small team to southern Turkey, and, still exhausted, flew off with another team to Iran. She later told me that the circles under her eyes had never been so dark. The crises in Iraq seemed never-ending. The uprising in the south had spread to Kurdistan in the north, where Kurdish forces had even taken the important, oil-rich city of Kirkuk. The Kurds, however, were no match for Saddam Hussein's army once the Shiite uprising had been suppressed; the army had launched a powerful offensive that had retaken Kirkuk, and was pressing north into the mountains. This time the Western powers had responded, and having drawn a line through the air along the 36th parallel, beyond which Iraqi aircraft were henceforth forbidden to fly, in April of 1991 they declared the north to be a "safe haven," and with subsequent assistance from the United Nations, effectively allowed for the birth of an autonomous Kurdish state. American F-16s patrolled the skies. With fighting on the ground continuing, however, and with memories of the *Anfal* campaign still fresh, much of the Kurdish population was on the run, whether deeper into the wilds or into Turkey or Iran.



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More than a million Iraqi refugees, primarily Kurds and Shiite Arabs, now huddled in Iran. They were held in huge camps strung from north to south along the entire length of the 906-mile border. Mufti and her colleagues traveled among them, interviewing the recent arrivals about Saddam's latest violence. It was another difficult mission. The weather turned hot. The Iranian government placed numerous obstacles in the investigators' way, and at one point held them under town arrest for two days, while various officials discussed the risk that they might make contact with Iranian opposition groups.

They had a "minder" from the Foreign Affairs Ministry with them at all times, whose assignment was to keep them under control. It was a difficult job, because these were not diplomats he was ushering around but tough and determined investigators. When they pulled into the camps,

Mufti traveled to Kurdistan whenever she could. Like the human-rights movement at large, she was drawn to Iraq by the sheer scale of the suffering, which had gotten inside of her and shaped her soul.

they would quickly be surrounded by hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of refugees, and would take advantage of the commotion to split apart. The minder had no choice but to follow one or another, leaving the others free to do their work. The refugees had no idea who these Westerners were. They would ask for blankets, perhaps, or for help in emigrating to Scandinavia. Eventually the investigators would explain enough of themselves to get the interview process going—ideally in the quasi-privacy of some tent, one person at a time, in production-line style. Mufti set her all-time record for number of interviews during that trip, in a Kurdish camp containing the survivors of the Barzani clan, sixty of whom spoke to her in a single day about the arrest and disappearance of their men, eight years before. These interviews were short, a few minutes each, because their contents closely overlapped. Other interviews could take two hours, or more. Given the enormity of the crimes that had been committed, it was sometimes more helpful to seek volume than depth, and to diversify the people being interviewed so that the testimonies would come from different times and places. Of course by no means did everyone want to talk—whether because of fear and suspicion, or because of the difficulty of reliving traumas that after years could still cause even hardened men to cry. Generally the reception in the northern camps was positive, because of the international charity that the Kurds had long enjoyed.

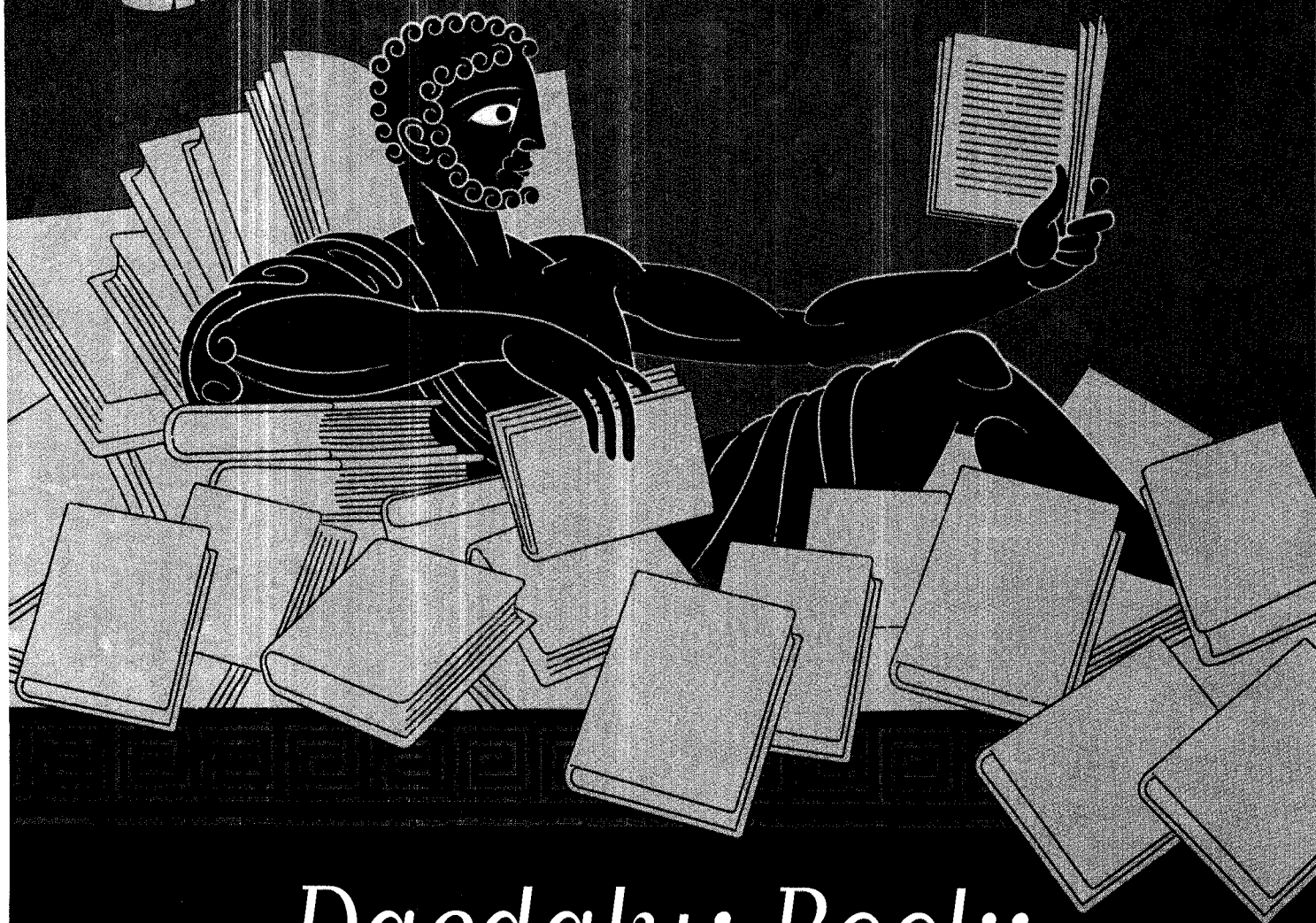
Conversely, in the south the Iraqi Shiite refugees expressed hostility at being merely studied for their plight, and they confused Amnesty International with other international groups that had more-tangible benefits to offer but so far had offered none. They were bitter. Given their own years of repression and loss under Saddam Hussein, why was it, the Shiites wanted to know, that such disproportionate attention had been paid to the Kurds? Why was it that their own uprising had recently been allowed to collapse, yet Kurdistan was now being propped up as practically an independent nation?

These were legitimate questions, to which it was not enough to answer that history is chance, and life is unfair. The Iraqi Kurds have indeed long been favored by the West. One reason may be the extreme beauty of their region—at least as compared with the scorching flatlands that consume the rest of the country. Another reason may be their long and honorable tradition of suffering and resistance, and their refusal nonetheless to resort to the kidnappings, bombings, and other terrorist techniques of the Middle East. Still another reason, though it can hardly be said, may be that they fundamentally do not like the Arabs, and neither, fundamentally, does the West.

In any case, with Saddam's forces being held at a distance, and de facto Kurdish autonomy developing fast, the pioneers of Western sympathy soon arrived in the north and began a still more ambitious effort to collect evidence of Baathist crimes. In December of 1991 an American team of forensics investigators from Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights crossed in from Turkey for a brief survey of some of the mass graves that had been discovered by the Kurds on the outskirts of several cities. Mufti arrived five months later, traveling alone in May of 1992, on the eve of the first Kurdish elections. There were no hotels. She slept in the border town of Zakho, in the home of a guerrilla fighter. When she went to bed and put her head on the pillow, she felt something hard, and reaching under, found a Kalashnikov. It was the perfect welcome to her first full night in Iraq. I asked her what she had done with the weapon. She said, "I kind of just put it aside and went to sleep, because, you know, it's a tiring trip by road."

The elections had ended by the next evening, when she arrived in the Kurdish city of Erbil. The balloting had gone smoothly, and people were celebrating in the streets, firing their weapons into the air. They were masters of themselves for the first time in centuries, and free at last of Saddam. Mufti crisscrossed the region, interviewing fugitives from the Baathist regime. Most significant, though, she spent time alone in back rooms, poring over captured Iraqi government records, a huge number of which the Kurdish political parties had seized and hauled away during the March 1991 uprising. The records were rigidly bureaucratic in style, and extraordinarily detailed—self-incriminating,

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perhaps, but a necessary mechanism of Baathist control. They were seized by the Kurds because of what they might show about intelligence operations, about the specific fate of the dead, and about original titles to confiscated properties. But then the physical realities of the collection had set in. Millions of documents, many of them in canvas bags and in binders that were falling apart, had been dumped haphazardly into spare rooms, and if only because of their collective size and weight, they were impossible to sort through. The Kurds had thrown up their hands at the task. They would unlock the back rooms for Mufti and invite her to stay as long as she liked, and sometimes to take whatever documents were of interest to her. She photocopied a few. The reading was riveting to her: here was the criminal regime in its own words. She searched for evidence of certain crimes and, during that process, came across a number of documents pertaining to the *Anfal* campaign, to specific arrests, and, most surprising, to Iraqi expatriates she knew in London, some of whom had been targets of the Iraqi intelligence services, others of whom had been collaborating—as she now discovered—and had been sending home reports.

Millions of incriminating Iraqi documents, many of them in canvas bags and in binders that were falling apart, had been dumped into spare rooms. The Kurds invited Mufti to examine them for as long as she liked.

The importance of the collection was well known to opponents of Saddam's regime. A small number of them had arrived in Kurdistan to do something about it. They included Kanan Makiya and a man named Peter Galbraith, who at the time was a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and who over the years since then has proved to be one of the more acute observers of the Iraqi scene. They joined with three investigators from Human Rights Watch, which had decided to commit significant resources to an ambitious project to document the history of the *Anfal* campaign. At the core of the project were the government records in Kurdistan. With the tacit support of the U.S. government, and a promise to safeguard and catalogue the documents, Kurdish authorities were persuaded that the best hope for the captured records was to release them into American custody. In May of 1992 the first of what would eventually amount to eighteen tons of documents (and a few invaluable audiotapes) were transported to Turkey and then flown by the U.S. Air Force to a government facility in suburban Washington, D.C.,

where employees of Human Rights Watch and the National Archives launched into the enormous job of translation and analysis. The work ultimately produced a damning record of Iraqi intentions and methods, including incontrovertible evidence of Ali Hassan al-Majid's knowledge and responsibility—documents that will now be used at last in court. Meanwhile, from April of 1992 to April of 1993 investigators from Human Rights Watch spent a total of six months in Kurdistan collecting relevant testimony from eyewitnesses. It was after this work that Human Rights Watch concluded that the *Anfal* had technically been genocidal, and that although no direct orders had been found, Saddam Hussein himself could be held legally responsible, along, of course, with Ali Hassan al-Majid and others. In the summer of 1993 the organization published its book-length report, *Genocide in Iraq*, and called for an international tribunal to hold members of the Baathist regime accountable. Specifically, Human Rights Watch had in mind a UN body in The Hague called the International Court of Justice, and a groundbreaking prosecution that would be based on the Genocide Convention. This was the lobbying effort that collapsed when governments turned away.

It was at this time, in the mid-1990s, that satellite pictures began to show evidence of the last great crime for which the Baathist regime will be put on trial—the destruction of the southeastern marshes, and particularly of the unique and ancient “Marsh Arab” culture they contained. On the surface the destruction was merely the sort of thing that governments naturally do—a major river-diversion project, planned since the 1980s, to dry up an unproductive swamp of 7,700 square miles, formed by the confluence of the lower Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and to provide efficient access to the oil deposits that lie beneath it. As usual for the Baathists, however, there was a political logic, and it was vicious. The Marsh Arabs had long lived their lives beyond Baghdad's control. More significant, their watery wilderness sheltered thousands of deserters from the Iran-Iraq War, and it had recently provided a haven to which Shiite rebels had been able to escape during the collapse of the 1991 uprising. It was not by chance that the drainage project began in earnest the following year. The Baathists called it a “modernization” of the region. The drying out proceeded in a patchwork pattern, as dikes and dams went up and drainage ditches were dug. The Marsh Arabs were required to abandon their villages, which were then rocketed or burned. To help persuade them Iraqi forces shot their water buffaloes, destroyed their boats, and sowed the remaining waterways with mines. Village by village, most of the Marsh Arabs moved to the cities and resettlement camps, and started new lives. The stalwarts who refused to leave and tried to flee deeper into the wilderness found that the wilderness was steadily shrinking. They were like game animals flushed by fire. Sooner or later most of them shared the fate of the thousands of fugitives in the region,



and were gunned down by helicopters, picked off in infantry sweeps, or rounded up and sent to prison, where many were tortured and killed.

As best she could from a distance, Hania Mufti kept track, but her output slacked off on the subject of Iraq. The truth is she was tired and discouraged, and she badly needed a break. The effort to muster support for a genocide trial had failed. Saddam Hussein remained in power. The Kurds were still killing one another. And to top it off, Amnesty International seemed caught up with internal concerns and increasingly bureaucratic. In the summer of 1997, therefore, Hania Mufti resigned from her job. For a while in London she simply relaxed. She slept late every day, read, and saw friends. After a few months she decided to go back to school, perhaps for a Ph.D. At first she thought she would use her expertise and study something related to the Middle East, but she soon realized that she couldn't bear the topic anymore, and so instead she studied French literature and philosophy. She enjoyed this very much. Like the human-rights movement itself, by the late 1990s Mufti had burned out on Iraq.

From within Baghdad today it seems like an omen that in the year 2000 Mufti returned to the struggle fully recharged. This time it was for Human Rights Watch, which would soon resume its earlier pre-eminence on the subject of Iraq—a position it has retained ever since. Mufti continued to work out of London. Initially she signed on

for only six months, but she kept finding reasons to stay, and then, as she now says, Iraq hotted up. She went to Syria and Jordan to interview refugees from the suppression of a new Shiite rebellion in the south, and documented the latest waves of repression in Baghdad and its environs. In both countries she encountered secret police, but was not directly threatened.

After her September visit to Kurdistan before the American invasion in March of 2003, she returned to London to write, and to help plan for the deployment of Human Rights Watch researchers, primarily to neighboring countries, in the event of the war that now seemed inevitable. She herself intended to be inside Iraq, prepositioned in Kurdistan, because of the likelihood that the international borders would be closed. Furthermore, she decided to leave London and relocate to Baghdad after the fall of Saddam. All this is indeed what happened. In early March of 2003 Mufti joined up with a mass-graves investigator formerly of Physicians for Human Rights, an American named Eric Stover, and traveled through Syria and then across the upper Tigris by barge, into Kurdistan. Her friends greeted her with delight, because they saw her presence there as a sign that war was really coming. And of course they were right.

The American invasion began on March 19. The bulk of the combat lay far to the south, but there was a northern front as well, where Kurdish fighters, assisted by American aircraft and Special Forces teams, slowly advanced

out of the mountains, tying up a portion of the Iraqi army. Mufti and Stover spent most of their time traveling along that front, interviewing deserters and others coming over from the Iraqi side and looking at Kurdish preparations for refugees and, possibly, the use of chemical weapons. They were in a Kurdish town doing just that when, on April 9, Baghdad fell. Wild cheering broke out. That afternoon Mufti and Stover drove to Sulaymaniyah, near the Iranian border. They arrived there in the evening amid a huge celebration that tied them up for hours in traffic. No complaint. Having deposited their car at the hotel, they walked through the dancing crowds on the streets, surrounded by people hugging and kissing. They were asked, as foreigners, to pose with people for photographs. Mufti did not feel like a foreigner, but she gladly played along. As artifacts of the war, those pictures would be worth finding. Mufti claims she is not photogenic, but she must have been radiant that night.

One human-rights lawyer has been told by Iraqi jurists that the longest trial in the history of the Baathist regime lasted two days. A national court in Iraq is simply incapable of delivering the sort of justice required.

The next day, April 10, she and Stover drove back along the front lines, where in the afternoon they heard that the long-disputed city of Kirkuk had just fallen. Having arranged with a Kurdish political party for armed protection, they proceeded there without hesitation. Rolling in from the north with her Kurdish gunmen, Mufti and the others were greeted as if they belonged to a liberating army—which indeed they did. They had stopped at a gas station to fill up when her satellite phone rang. It was New York calling. The staff had just learned of the fall of Kirkuk, and was sending urgent instructions that under no circumstances should she risk going there. Mufti answered, simply enough, “I’m sorry, but we’re already here.” And by the way, it was too late in the day to leave. They stayed two nights. The streets were a carnival. Mufti called her husband in London, who said, “Yeah, I can see it on TV.” She replied, “No, it’s not the same. I wouldn’t have missed this for the world.” The satellite phone was a bulky Thuraya, which required her to stand outside with the antenna directed southward, toward the equatorial sky. People spotted her with it, and crowded around to call their families abroad with short, happy messages that they were alive.

Of course, most of Iraq was not so glad. In nearby Mosul, as well as in Baghdad and other cities that had

belonged to the regime, the Baathist collapse resulted not in street parties but in immediate looting and death—a pattern of chaos that led through the failures of the American occupation to the conflict that consumes the country today. Mufti and Stover were taken to the sites of several mass graves, some of which were clearly visible as mounds of earth. At the time, still only days after the fall of the regime, the sites were undisturbed—but they were also unprotected, and vulnerable to being dug up by relatives of the victims, looking for the remains of their loved ones. Concerned about the effect of such informal excavations on the state of evidence that could prove crucial in an eventual legal case against the regime, Mufti and Stover talked to American soldiers nearby about the need to provide protection. The soldiers answered, correctly, that they were short-handed, and already overwhelmed by the more pressing needs of an occupying army. Soon afterward the informal excavations began, along with the large-scale looting of documentary evidence that was potentially even more important. Eric Stover left Kurdistan and went home. Mufti stayed on in the north for two weeks, and toward the end of April, on a momentous day in her life, finally arrived in Baghdad. The worst of the looting was over, and there was enough calm in the shattered streets for her to feel the popular elation, despite the fear and violence that lay below the surface.

One day she went to the scene of so much of her research, the prison at Abu Ghraib, whose doors stood temporarily ajar. She found two looters there, looking in the wrong place for prizes. She ignored them. The history of the Baathists’ crimes weighed on her mind. Crimes as large as these require a very thoughtful response. Saddam Hussein and most of his circle had not yet been found, but when they were, there would be a need for the deepest sort of justice to be done. Human Rights Watch had renewed that call during the months leading up to war, and it had been repeated by the leaders of Great Britain and the United States. Deep justice in this case would derive from open trials, based on the latest developments in international law, protected from political influence, and competently managed. Trials in which the defendants would have every chance to answer the prosecution, as long as they confined themselves to the specific charges at hand. Trials in which the defendants would be treated firmly in proceedings that would be unassailably fair—and precisely because these men were guilty, and never gave their victims any such chance. Trials that could work as models of enlightenment, and might thereby serve not as a justification of the American intervention but as at least one acceptable consequence of the war. Trials that would stand like islands in the Middle East. This was what Hania Mufti hoped for. Given the finite nature of the task and its obvious importance to both Iraq and the United States, there was no reason to think that it could not be pulled off.

Her acquaintance Salem Chalabi clearly agreed. He despised the former regime but understood the need for genuine justice, and earnestly believed in the possibility of an enlightened Iraq that could deliver it, using international laws and advisers, but managing the process as a national affair. He was probably not the best man to design the tribunal or to run it, but he was the one who was available and sincere. At the end of 2003, when the tribunal was signed into existence, he began immediately to prepare for the first of what he believed would be historically significant trials. It didn't take long, however, for doubts to set in. By the spring of 2004, as he struggled to find capable judges and to pull together a functional team, he began to suspect that the Iraq he'd had in mind simply did not exist. He said this to me at the time. Whatever illusions he still harbored evaporated that summer, just weeks after Iraq became a sovereign state, when he was not merely dismissed from his position by Ayad Allawi's interim government, but also set up on phony murder charges, and essentially banished from the country. As a means of deposing an official, the technique was disturbingly similar to those used by Saddam Hussein, though without the need (yet) for Chalabi to be tortured and killed. He was replaced by a deputy, who in turn was soon replaced by a loyalist to the acting prime minister—a man with no legal experience—and any semblance of judicial independence collapsed.

That is just one small sample of the troubles that lie ahead. Twenty-three months after the collapse of the Baathist regime, as the first of the trials begins, there is a serious risk that in practice the justice will be shallow. Indeed, the façade of good procedure is surprisingly thin. Beyond it lies tremendous confusion of uncollected evidence—documentary, forensic, and testimonial—most of which cannot be gotten to because of the violence in Iraq, and which has been tainted in any case by looting, forgery, and chaotic pawing-over. Equally problematic are the people involved—not least the judges, who still lack the necessary knowledge, and feel politically and physically vulnerable. Last fall they were sent to London for a week of training. The trip was arranged by a team of American advisers in Baghdad who have been there for more than a year, trying to shape them up. Privately the Americans were discouraged. The trainers who joined the judges in London came away believing that much further work is necessary. Now some of the judges themselves admit that they are unprepared. Were it not for the evidence-gathering done long ago by Human Rights Watch on the *Anfal* campaign, they would have little or nothing at all.

From the start Human Rights Watch has warned that justice cannot be served in such a haphazard way, and it has tried to bring about changes through private and

public comment, with the understanding that the flaws of the tribunal will be locked into place when the first trial begins, but that until then there is a possibility for reform—or even a complete rethinking. Hania Mufti has been in Baghdad, closely watching and arguing the case, in which she has a twenty-year personal stake. Back in New York she has been joined by the hierarchy of the organization, and particularly by one of its lawyers, a man named Richard Dicker, who has provided a wealth of criticisms and suggestions, and has proved to be the most prescient of the tribunal's observers. Most of his comments have pertained to legal specifics, such as the inclusion of the death penalty, the selection of judges, the lack of the prisoners' access to defense counsel, the possibility that information presented may have been obtained through torture, and technical aspects of the rules of evidence and procedure. He has also pointed out that the court is inherently vulnerable to political manipulation. Underlying this weakness is the American insistence on rejecting significant international participation and on making the tribunal a national court—here, in a place that is not really a nation, decimated by decades of repression and war. That is my observation, not Dicker's. But Dicker, in his own travels to Iraq, has been told by Iraqi jurists that the longest trial in the thirty-year history of the Baathist regime lasted only two days. A national court in Iraq is simply incapable of delivering the sort of justice required.

Opposition to the tribunal has put Hania Mufti in something of a bind. On the one hand, she cannot fully participate in the logical conclusion of her decades of labor—for instance, by collaborating with the prosecution as she might if she believed that justice could truly be done. On the other hand, she refuses just to walk away from this history—and in truth is willing to suffer hardships and considerable personal risk to see it through. She told me once about a meeting she had with a group of American representatives to the tribunal, who initially would not allow Mufti to see the proposed rules of evidence. One of them finally admitted, "Well, the folks back in Washington are concerned that if we get you involved in the process, you might trash the whole thing."

Mufti was taken aback. She said, "Look, we've been doing this work for the past two decades, long before the U.S. had any interest. And more than probably anybody else, we want the right kind of justice delivered. So whatever we comment on, whatever we participate in, it's done in a constructive and positive spirit, because we do want this process to work."

Mufti will stay on as a close observer, confronting the problems of Iraq not only in the past but in this present form, the tribunal, today. This is the nature of the life she has chosen. She told me that she knows she lives in an imperfect world. But it happens to be the real world, and she remains determined to make the best of it. ■

THE ACCIDENTAL AUTOCRAT

Vladimir Putin is not a democrat. Nor is he a czar like Alexander III, a paranoid like Stalin, or a religious nationalist like Dostoyevsky. But he is a little of all these—which is just what Russians seem to want

BY PAUL STAROBIN

Photographs by Konrad R. Mueller

.....

Like many Russians, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin is a late riser. Sometimes he doesn't roll out of bed until 11:00 A.M. Russia's president lives with his wife, Lyudmila, and two teenage daughters, Maria and Katerina, about twenty-five miles west of the center of Moscow, at Novo Ogarevo, a country estate dotted with white birch and pine trees that was built in the late nineteenth century for a son of Czar Alexander II. The neighborhood is now a haven for wealthy Russians, who have constructed opulent and often tasteless dachas. Trim and fit for his fifty-two years, Putin usually starts his mornings with a vigorous workout in the compound's small indoor pool. (The butterfly stroke is a favorite.) The grounds contain stables, a recently restored Orthodox church, a vegetable plot, and a helipad, and Putin sometimes spends the day working at Novo Ogarevo, receiving visitors there rather than at the Kremlin. In any case, he seldom leaves for the office much before noon.

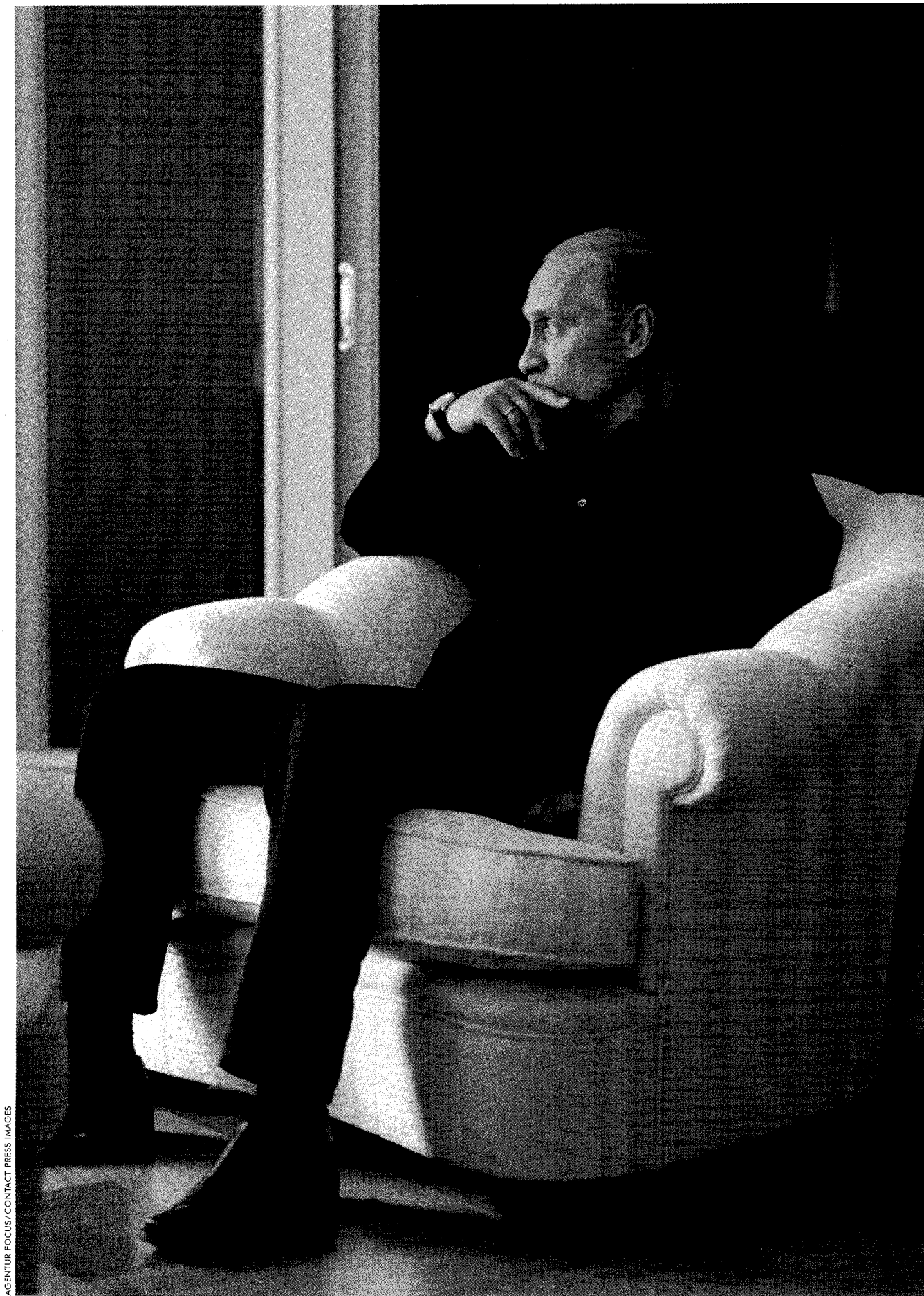
On days that he does go to the office, Putin speeds across the Moscow River in the back seat of his armored Mercedes Pullman and then cruises down the Novy Arbat, a garish boulevard bordered by neon-lit casinos, sushi bars, and ugly Soviet-era high-rise office buildings. Putin's motorcade deposits him inside the Kremlin walls, near his office in the Old Senate, a mustard-colored neoclassical building commissioned by Catherine the Great in the 1770s. Lenin made his headquarters here after the 1917 Revolution, when the Bolsheviks moved the capital to Moscow from imperial St. Petersburg.

Putin's office, in the northwest corner of the second floor, affords a view of Red Square. The office is spare and impersonal, with a somewhat antiquated feel. It has a clunky television and a bank of several dozen phones with heavy handsets—direct lines to the offices of Putin's Kremlin aides and other senior officials. Down the corridor, in a remodeled set

of rooms that once contained Stalin's living quarters, is a small candlelit Orthodox chapel with icon paintings on the walls. Putin's immediate predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, had the chapel built but rarely entered it (according to what Putin told one visitor); Putin, in contrast, goes there very often. His private dining room, also on the second floor, contains a collection of bottles of Spanish red wine, one of his favorites. He likes to wash down his appetizers—what the Russians call *zakuski*, which are often the tastiest part of a meal—with a couple of shots of vodka, and to end his repast with a cognac from Dagestan, a province in Russia's troubled northern Caucasus. (Yeltsin's popularity, and Russia's image, suffered from his occasional displays of public drunkenness; Putin benefits from a reputation for sobriety and takes care to imbibe modestly in public.) He sometimes has dinner at the Kremlin, but more often heads back to Novo Ogarevo, where his work continues. Sipping cups of tea, Putin frequently works past midnight. An aide told me that "VVP," as his staff members sometimes refer to him, never hits the sack before 2:00 A.M.

The Russians have a saying: "*Tyazela ti shapka manomakha*"—"The crown of the czar is very heavy." On September 1 of last year a group of heavily armed men and women seized a middle school in Beslan, a railway-junction town in North Ossetia, a northern Caucasian province. They herded twelve hundred hostages, most of them children, into the gymnasium and wired it with explosives. The hostage-takers were Islamic militants; the operation was apparently organized by Shamil Basayev, a warlord whom Putin has likened to Osama bin Laden and who is leading a decade-old insurgency in the Caucasian republic of Chechnya and seeking to widen the rebellion to surrounding, largely Muslim provinces. (North Ossetia, an exception in the region, is predominantly Orthodox Christian.) The insurgents boasted of having made their way to the school by bribing the police at

Paul Starobin is a contributing editor of The Atlantic and a staff correspondent for National Journal.



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checkpoints along their route. "All your officials are mendacious and corrupt," one hostage recalls being told. Russian special forces surrounded the school. After a fifty-two-hour standoff a bomb exploded in the gym, perhaps accidentally, precipitating an hours-long firefight that killed some 330 of the hostages and wounded about 700.

On the day after the bloodbath Putin addressed the nation on television from the Kremlin. He seemed stripped raw; the brief clip I caught on the news was painful to watch. "It is a difficult and bitter task for me to speak," he began. "During these last few days each one of us suffered immensely." The thrust of his message was shame and embarrassment that Russians, "living in conditions formed after the disintegration of a huge, great country," had failed to pay enough attention to their defenses. "We demonstrated weakness, and the weak are beaten." His face was drained of color. I wondered if he was in shock.

But he soon rallied, unveiling in the days that followed a series of measures designed, he said, "to put right the system of power and management in the country." One measure was to end the popular election of regional governors and have the Kremlin appoint them instead, subject to confirmation by regional legislatures. In the West a chorus of critics decried a retreat to Russia's authoritarian past. Such criticism, though a bit sanctimonious, is reasonably well grounded: in the years since an ailing Yeltsin appointed him Russia's president, on December 31, 1999, Putin has in numerous ways tried to reassert Kremlin control over the country. (Voters ratified Yeltsin's choice in a March 2000 election, and elected Putin to a second four-year term in March of 2004.) But the West's concerns nevertheless struck me as out of touch with the anxieties and priorities of ordinary Russians. I lived and worked in Russia from 1999 to 2003, as the Moscow bureau chief of *BusinessWeek*, and most of the Russians I met (with the exception of those in the liberal intelligentsia) were supportive of the general direction of Putin's leadership. In fact, the majority of the criticism I heard came from people who felt that he was not authoritarian enough.

Putin is a difficult character study. An ex-KGB colonel, he is at times deliberately indistinct. And his secretive and tight-knit court tends to operate according to the old Russian village principle of "*Iz izby soru ne vynes*"—literally, "Do not carry rubbish out of the hut." In the emerging school of Putinology, theories abound as to what makes him tick. Many analysts emphasize his intelligence training and his Soviet-era background. Alexander Rahr, the author of a biography of Putin calling him "the German in the Kremlin," sees him instead in the context of his KGB posting in Dresden and his affinity for German culture (he speaks German fluently). Others see a somewhat ambivalent Putin, split—as Russians often are—between an outward-facing Western orientation and an inward-looking Slavophilic one. The boisterous, red-faced Yeltsin—that

bear of a man—more naturally fit the Western idea of a Russian leader. But Putin is as much a product of the Russian environment and heritage as Yeltsin was. In fact, Putin's Russianness, in the broadest sense, is the key to his character; in certain respects his rule is re-enacting distinctive Russian political traditions.

Understanding Putin requires exploring three core aspects of his political and personal character: the fighter, the Chekist, and the believer. These roughly correspond to Putin's instincts, his professional training and methods, and his religious and patriotic convictions. The parts may seem not to fit, but that is often the case with Russia's rulers. (After all, Stalin, the "Red Czar," was trained in a Georgian seminary.) Putin is best understood not as a divided character but as an integrated if complicated one: the Russian in the Kremlin.

THE FIGHTER

In *First Person* (2000), a collection of interviews with and about him, Vladimir Putin mentions being beaten by stronger children in his rough-and-tumble neighborhood in Leningrad. It's not clear whether he was generally the instigator of the combat or responding to taunts and insults he felt should not go unchallenged. In any case, he resolved to fortify himself. "As soon as it became clear that my pugnacious nature was not going to keep me king of the courtyard or schoolgrounds," he said, "I decided to go into boxing." After getting his nose broken, he took up sambo, a Soviet combination of judo and wrestling, and finally settled on judo. He devoted himself to rigorous workouts and became a black belt and a city-wide champion. He fought like a "snow leopard," his coach once said, "determined to win at any cost."

The wonder is that he even made it into childhood. Two older brothers had died of illnesses, one in infancy and the other at age five. When Vladimir was born, on October 7, 1952, his mother was forty-one, and her prenatal health had no doubt been poor. A decade earlier, during the Nazi siege of Leningrad, there were mass deaths from starvation; "Mama herself was half dead," Putin recalls in *First Person*. His father, recuperating in a hospital from severe leg wounds caused by German shrapnel, gave her his food. After the war "Papa" went to work as a laborer at a train-car factory. He was given a room in a fifth-floor communal walk-up at 12 Baskov Lane, where Putin grew up, about a twenty-minute stroll from Nevsky Prospekt, the city's main thoroughfare. There were "hordes of rats" in the front entryway, which the young Putin chased with sticks. Once, he cornered one—only to have it rush at him. Frightened, Putin slammed the door shut "in its nose."

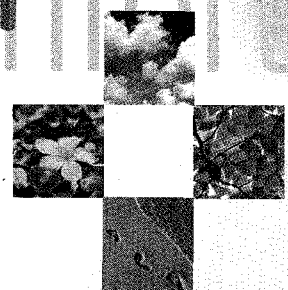
I recently came across an intriguing hypothesis about Putin's survival skills. Brenda L. Connors, a senior fellow in the strategic-research department of the Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, is both a former State Depart-

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ment protocol and political-affairs officer and a onetime soloist with the Erick Hawkins Dance Company. Her field of study is a distinctive one: she is a certified "movement analyst." Because of her experience greeting Mikhail Gorbachev and other global figures and her study of modern dance, Connors became intrigued by how body movement—everything from a particular way of walking to hand gestures and facial expressions—constitutes a language for conveying not only emotion but also leadership styles and behavioral patterns. From close analysis of physical traits, captured on tape and examined with the help of experts in medicine, psychology, anthropology, and other fields, she has developed character profiles of a number of world leaders. Her work may sound esoteric, but it is endorsed by, among others, Andrew Marshall, the legendary director of "net assessment" in the Pentagon, and Leon Aron, a leading Russia specialist at the American Enterprise Institute, in Washington, and the author of an acclaimed biography of Yeltsin.

I paid a visit to Connors at her Newport office not long ago. We had chatted on the phone about her work on Putin—in particular about her detection of a striking irregularity in his gait—and I was eager to see her tapes and to hear more. After a tour of her lab we watched a tape she had made of Putin, compiled mostly from Russian television footage. The tape rolled to a shot of Putin at his first inauguration, in the spring of 2000, at the Andrei Hall of the Great Kremlin Palace. "Here's the picture," she said, as we watched Putin enter the hall and stride down a long red carpet. I saw what she meant only when she slowed the tape—and when she did, I was taken aback. Putin's left arm and leg were moving in an easy, natural rhythm. But his right arm, bent at the elbow, moved in a stiff way, as if jerked by the shoulder, and the right leg dragged, without absorbing his full weight. When she replayed the segment at normal speed, it was easy to pick up on the impediment, and then I had no trouble spotting it in other segments. All the momentum and energy in Putin's gait comes from the left side; it is as if the right side is just along for the ride. Even the right side of his torso seems frozen. When he is holding a pen, his right hand appears to have only an awkward, tenuous grasp on it.

Connors has shown footage of Putin's walk to a range of experts, including A. Thomas Pezzella, a cardiac-thoracic surgeon based in St. Louis; two orthopedic surgeons and a physical therapist at the naval hospital in Newport; and Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the founder of the School for Body-Mind Centering, in Amherst, Massachusetts, who is certified as something called a neurodevelopmental therapist. They offer a variety of conjectures: Putin could have had a stroke, perhaps suffered *in utero*; he may be afflicted with, as Pezzella speculates, an Erb's palsy, caused by a forceps tugging on his right shoulder at birth; he could have had polio as a child (polio was epidemic in Europe

and western Russia after World War II). The stroke theory is consistent with what appears to be the loss of neural sensation in the fingers of his right hand. (Videotape of Putin at judo matches shows him using his fist, rather than a splayed hand, to push himself up off the mat.) Based on what she has seen and on her consultation with other experts, Connors doubts that Putin ever crawled as an infant; he seems to lack what is called contra-lateral movement and instead tends to move in a head-to-tail pattern, like a fish or a reptile.

Connors believes that Putin's infirmities "created a strong will that he survive and an impetus to balance and strengthen the body." She continues, "When we are unable to do something, really hard work becomes the way." His prowess at judo astonishes her: "He is like that ice skater who had a club foot and became an Olympic skater." Although her research sounds clinical, Connors empathizes with her subject. "It is really poignant to watch him on tape," she says of Putin. "This is a deep, old, profound loss that he has learned to cope with, magnificently." When I heard this, it was impossible for me not to think of another frail child possessed of a fierce will who turned to rigorous physical exercise and pugilism and grew up to be a head of state: Theodore Roosevelt.

Like Stalin, Putin has the kind of eyes that give those who meet him the unsettling feeling of being seen through. His KGB colleagues described them as eyes that "don't let you lie."

Some of Connors's analytical ventures seem unconvincing. She suggests, for example, that Putin's instinct to make himself whole is mirrored in his imperative to keep Russia from breaking up—but any Russian leader would feel a similar sense of duty. The notion that Putin displays reptilian qualities, however, is not as odd as it may sound; even though ontogeny may not exactly recapitulate phylogeny, modern biology does recognize links between embryonic development and the evolutionary sequences. A characteristic of reptiles, Connors says, is that "they patrol their borders, and if an alien enters, lunge reflexively." That is as good a description of Putin's behavior in response to militants in the northern Caucasus as any political analyst has offered.

As the Chechen conflict illustrates, Putin is a ferocious, even pitiless fighter. One need not put stock in Connors's research to see that life does seem to have taught Putin that "the weak are beaten." Post-Soviet Russia's first Chechen war began in 1994, when Yeltsin invaded Chechnya to thwart a drive for sovereignty led by a radical separatist, Dzhokhar Dudayev. After nearly two years of savage

fighting, and the assassination of Dudayev, a truce was reached and Russian forces withdrew. But the peace was tenuous. In August of 1999 Basayev, a guerrilla leader in the first war whose cause had taken on an increasingly Islamic cast, led an invasion of neighboring Dagestan with a force of Muslim soldiers that included Dagestani Wahhabis and fighters from Central Asia and the Middle East. Basayev's avowed goal was to create a united Chechen-Dagestani Islamic state.

Days after the invasion Yeltsin appointed Putin prime minister—and in so doing made him heir apparent to the presidency. At the time, Putin was serving as the head of the Federal Security Services, the successor agency to the KGB. Yeltsin was chronically sick and seldom had more than a few good working hours a day. Thus the Chechnya situation was in Putin's hands. Under his leadership Russian forces drove the insurgents out of Dagestan and back into Chechnya. In September, Moscow and several other Russian cities were racked by a wave of apartment bombings—apparently the work of Islamic terrorists, although no one claimed responsibility. An unnerved Russian public behind him, Putin responded with a brutal invasion of Chechnya. Using underworld slang to describe his intentions toward the guerrillas, he promised “*mochit' v sortire*”—to wipe them out (or, in the literal rendition of the slang, to “make wet” or “make bloody”) in the toilet. Chechnya's capital, Grozny, was destroyed by Russian bombers. By the beginning of 2002 Russian forces had control of most of the territory (an area about the size of New Jersey) except for the insurgents' hideouts in mountainous areas, from which they could (and still can) launch small-scale attacks. When I visited Grozny in the fall of 2002, I found a mostly deserted city still in ruins.

Putin's judo training taught him to control his emotions, but when he is angry his outbursts can be not only crude but breathtakingly acerbic. At a press conference in Brussels in November of 2002 a reporter from *Le Monde* asked him about the use of anti-personnel landmines in Chechnya. When that drew an angry retort from Putin, the reporter followed up with an even more pointed question: “Don't you think that in trying to eradicate terrorism you're going to eradicate the civilian population in Chechnya?” Putin's reply: “If you want to become an Islamic radical and have a circumcision, I invite you to Moscow, because we are a multi-talented country and have specialists there. I recommend that you have the operation done in such a way that nothing else will grow there.”

With the evolution of the Chechen conflict into what is essentially a blood feud, Putin is quite right to take it personally. The insurgents have posted a \$20 million bounty



on his head, and a likely goal is the kidnapping of his teenage daughters. The Russian Orthodox and Islamic cultures are both patriarchal. As a man, and as Russia's symbolic father, Putin is supposed to protect women and children. His tormentors were triumphant when he acknowledged that he had “suffered immensely” from the Beslan ordeal. They had pierced his shield and made him seem womanish. “Putin screamed like a stuck pig,” Basayev crowed in a statement posted on a Web site.

Critics in Russia and in the West argue that Putin's harsh policies—not least the indiscriminate destruction of Grozny—invite terrorist retribution against Russian innocents. But he does not see things that way—and even his critics must acknowledge that he has bottled up the Chechen rebellion and the broader territorial aspirations of Basayev's band. Nor is his skepticism about a negotiated settlement unreasonable—Basayev, after all, used the truce agreed to by Yeltsin in 1996 to reorganize and launch a fresh assault. Shortly after the Beslan incident Putin met with a group of Russia watchers from the United States and Europe at Novo Ogarevo. Among them was Alexander Rahr, the Putin biographer. I asked Rahr to describe the president's mindset after Beslan. “Very combative,” Rahr said. “He is like a sportsman ... He is in the stage of recovering, of building strength, of building muscles, of focusing on the enemy.”

THE CHEKIST

In 1932 James Abbe, an American photographer, went to Moscow and managed to talk his way into a rare photo session with Stalin. "My years in the cinema had taught me that eyes are at least 75 percent of any portrait," Abbe later wrote. Stalin, Abbe found, made an extraordinary impression: "As soon as I saw the whites of his eyes I recognized that Stalin has the surgical ability to remove a man's thoughts from his head and sort them out on the table."

Putin, too, has the kind of eyes that give those who meet his gaze the unsettling feeling of being seen through (his are a metallic blue, Stalin's were a feline yellow). Putin's KGB colleagues were struck by "eyes that 'don't let you lie,'" according to a dossier prepared by a Moscow political researcher. In studying Putin on tape Connors has been impressed by both the intensity of his gaze and his listening skills—she calls him "an evaluator *extraordinaire*." These are strong assets for a Chekist—one who served in a Soviet security agency. (The first Soviet security agency was the Cheka, an acronym for Chrezvychainaya Komissiya, or All-Russian Extraordinary Commission.)

The notion of joining the KGB began as a boyhood dream. Putin was under the influence, he told the compilers of *First Person*, of spy novels and movies: "What amazed me most of all was how one man's effort could achieve what whole armies could not. One spy could decide the fate of thousands of people." In ninth grade he went to the office of the KGB directorate in Leningrad and declared his interest in a job. He was told that the KGB didn't take people who came in on their own initiative, and that he needed some higher civilian education, such as law school. "From that moment on," Putin said, "I began to prepare for the law faculty of Leningrad University." In his fourth year at the school he was invited to join "the agencies." After graduation, in 1975, he embarked on a sixteen-year career with the KGB, mostly in the foreign-intelligence section. He left the security service after the botched 1991 coup, led by KGB hardliners, that tried to preserve the Soviet Union. The plotters had a "noble" intention, he would later say, but their method was wrong.

Putin the Chekist is a model of cool calculation, elusiveness, and calibrated tactics. He wears casual cynicism like an old cloak—insisting, for example, on his fealty to freedom of the press while re-establishing Kremlin control over the nation's television networks, which during the Yeltsin years were taken over by billionaire oligarchs with their own political agendas. His Chekist mentality seems to reveal less an active antipathy toward democracy than an impatience with its inherent untidiness.

One of the happier results of Putin's vocational schooling is an attention to organization and detail. Rabbi Beryl Lazar, a leader of the Russian Jewish community, told me a tale of his efficiency-mindedness. A few years ago, at a regular meeting with Putin in the Kremlin, Lazar brought

up the difficulty faced by a young Moscow woman who had removed an anti-Semitic sign from a roadside, only to trigger a rigged explosive that severely burned and nearly blinded her. The woman was getting hassled by her neighbors, Lazar told Putin, and wished to relocate to an apartment in another neighborhood. Lazar wasn't sure that Putin was paying close attention. He left Putin's office but was stopped downstairs at a guard's station and told to go back. An aide said Putin had rung up Moscow's mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, to talk about the apartment, and that Luzhkov was waiting to meet with Lazar. It may be that Putin handles such tasks himself because he lacks confidence that they will otherwise get done. "He gets extremely frustrated with the incompetence of the state," the rabbi told me.

One would expect a fellow of Putin's trade to be suspicious, and indeed, even those kindly disposed toward him say that he can be excessively mistrustful. Perhaps only half a dozen people have his full confidence, and nearly all of them he has known for years. That group is something like a clan; the Moscow political analyst Olga Kryzhanovskaya told me that Putin has in effect re-created a Soviet-style politburo. But even in his lair, among team members, Putin tends to withhold. In meetings he "never commits himself," one Moscow insider who has observed Putin in private group settings told me. His two closest Kremlin aides are ex-KGB. One, Igor Sechin, a squeaky-voiced veteran of the Soviet Union's campaign to aid Communist proxies in Angola, guards Putin's paper flow, among other duties. The other, Viktor Ivanov, a veteran of the failed Afghanistan venture in the 1980s, has a portfolio that includes vetting government appointments and advising on Chechnya policy. Both are known for their animus toward Western-style Russian liberals, with whom Putin himself has been intermittently friendly. Many Kremlin watchers believe that Putin's smartest aide is Vladislav Surkov, the one person in the inner circle whom Putin didn't know before becoming president. Surkov, who handles political operations and relations with the Duma, is half Chechen but second to none in his hard line on Chechnya issues.

Perhaps the best illustration of Putin's repertoire of Chekist skills can be seen in his dealings with the oligarchs, who infiltrated Yeltsin's Kremlin, made fortunes in rigged privatization auctions, and seemed to regard the state as their private preserve. On joining the Kremlin staff in 1996 Putin worked among the oligarchs and their protectors in the Kremlin—a group, including one of Yeltsin's daughters, known as the Family. He could never have moved up the ladder, and surely not to the position of prime minister, without the Family's blessing, and indeed, he came to be accepted as one of them. So when he got the nod as president, they figured all would be business as usual. "He won't try to arrest or screw the oligarchs," Mikhail Fridman, a billionaire with oil and banking interests, told me at the time.

But as soon became clear, Putin viewed the oligarchs much the way ordinary Russians did: as gangsters with an insidious grip on the levers of political power. He proceeded to break their hold, using every pressure point possible. His first target was Vladimir Gusinsky, a media baron who had helped bankroll Yeltsin's 1996 election and whose financial empire had debts guaranteed by a state-controlled company. Gusinsky was arrested and jailed on charges of embezzling state property. He signed away his business interests in return for being allowed to go into exile in the West. Putin's next target, the flamboyant Boris Berezovsky, who had served in Yeltsin's administration and actively assisted in Putin's rise, fled the country rather than face a likely embezzlement charge.

After the departures of Berezovsky and Gusinsky, Putin and the oligarchs established an unwritten pact: the remaining magnates could keep their fortunes and their freedom as long as they stayed out of the political arena. But the oil baron Mikhail Khodorkovsky tested Putin by declaring his intention of bankrolling opposition political parties. Putin sent a warning shot: the arrest of one of Khodorkovsky's partners. But Khodorkovsky persisted, and in the pre-dawn hours one fall morning in 2003 he was apprehended in his private airplane, which was on a refueling stop in Siberia. He is jailed in Moscow, while his trial for fraud and tax evasion drags on. Khodorkovsky's company, Yukos, which tax authorities slapped with billions of dollars in claims, is being broken up, with the most valuable pieces turned over to a state-owned company. The Chekists play to win.

As Russians see it, they turned back Napoleon and then Hitler—and are now battling on the front lines against Islamic barbarism. Putin, according to his confessor, knows that Russia can count only on itself.

In the West the Khodorkovsky affair sparked indignation over Putin's manipulation of law-enforcement bodies and the courts. But in Russia, although nobody believes that Putin is observing the rule of law, most ordinary citizens and members of the political elite (again, aside from liberals) support his maneuvers. "Misha violated the rules he agreed to before," Mikhail Margelov, a former KGB official who is now a member of the Duma, says of Khodorkovsky. (The liberal political leader and banker Boris Nemtsov characterizes Putin as typically Russian in his adherence to *po ponyatiyam*—"underground agreements"—rather than law.) Even many expatriate Western investors in Russia are behind Putin. William Browder, a former Wall Street investment banker who manages Hermitage Capital, a Moscow-

based investment fund, frames the matter this way: "We have two choices. We can have the rule of the mafia or an authoritarian president." However rough his methods, Putin's tenure has been accompanied by steady economic growth and the creation of an entrepreneurial middle class in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other large cities.

There is not so much an emerging rule of law in Russia as an emerging rule of Putin. Thus one abiding question is whether Putin can resist the bounty at his feet. Cynicism is pervasive: the general feeling is that it would take a Herculean effort on Putin's part not to grab some choice morsels. "The jury is out" on whether Putin is driven principally by patriotic or selfish motives, a well-informed U.S. official told me recently. I find that Russians tend to think Putin may be both selfish *and* patriotic, on the logic that it is okay for a leader to take a cut for himself as long as the first, best cut goes to the country. Putin has certainly upgraded himself sartorially, but nobody has detected any lavish displays of wealth. His salary is about 150,000 rubles—or \$5,000—a month.

THE BELIEVER

The Sretensky Monastery, a twenty-minute walk north from the Kremlin on Bolshaya Lubyanka street, was founded in 1397 on sacred national soil: the spot where Muscovites had met a delegation of Orthodox priests from the Russian city of Vladimir, who had brought with them an icon to save Moscow from the infidel warrior Tamerlane. Legend has it that at that very moment Tamerlane had a vision of the Holy Mother, who ordered him to spare Moscow. He fled. In 1925 the monastery was commandeered by Chekists, who razed churches, massacred believers, and built a dormitory for officers. In 1995 the Sretensky Monastery was reopened; these days it is thriving, with a new bell tower, a renovated chapel, a busy bookstore, a memorial to the martyred victims of the Cheka, and a seminary. On a drizzly Wednesday morning I strolled through the gates and past a garden of ferns and red roses, and knocked on the door of Father Tikhon, the monastery's abbot and Putin's personal confessor.

Father Tikhon would not confirm this relationship; church rules don't allow him to say whether a *babushka* is confessing to him, never mind Russia's president. But the person confessing is free to acknowledge the tie, and the Kremlin did so on the president's behalf. Putin, who was secretly baptized by his mother (she didn't want his father to know), met Father Tikhon well before becoming president, according to the Kremlin. They now get together wherever and whenever Putin wishes. For the Russian Orthodox, the confession is an elaborate, intimate institution; the obligation is very much on the side of the confessing party, and there is great reverence for the confessor. "One must consult him on all matters, receive him lovingly, and bow to him," says *Domostroi*, a sixteenth-century manual that offers directions for daily life based on Orthodox principles.



I approached my meeting with Father Tikhon with curiosity but also a bit of apprehension. From what I had been able to glean, he has a reputation for being an opportunistic church politician; he has close connections not only to Putin but also to other powerful government officials who have backgrounds in the KGB. He is also reported to hold crudely nationalistic views. In the summer of 1998 the British writer Victoria Clark interviewed him for her book *Why Angels Fall*, about Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe and Russia. Clark's book describes Father Tikhon as a "sharp-eyed, wiry young monk with a straggling flame-red beard," and quotes him as asserting that the gulags were set up by Jews.

When I met Father Tikhon, now approaching fifty, his beard had turned from flame-red to rust-brown, but he still looked slim and youthful. He wore a black frock and a crucifix on a chain that hung down to his abdomen; his long hair was tied neatly in a ponytail. We sat close together at a round wooden table on which he deposited two cell phones. Against my expectations, I found him disarming and easy to talk to.

I tried to draw him out about Putin by suggesting that the leader of Russia had a spiritual role to play. He gave me a quizzical look and asked what I meant. The leader's job, I replied, is not simply to defend the state, the territory of Russia, but to be a kind of custodian for the idea of Rus-

sia and a protector of the national soul. That last thought brought forth a stream of words. "You feel it exactly right," Father Tikhon told me. "The importance of the first person [he used the phrase *pervoye litso*, which translates as 'first face' or 'first image'] is overwhelming, much more important than in America." And this, he went on, can be for good or ill. Under Czar Alexander III—"a very strong czar" who famously said that Russia had no allies but its army and navy—Russia was formidable, on a par with the European powers. Lenin, in contrast, "was a man of no principles, a monster, [who] turned Russia into a monster." As for Yeltsin, he was frivolous, "not sober," and during his tenure Russia became wobbly and threatened to break into pieces.

So what, I asked, is Putin's image and example for Russia? "Work," Father Tikhon began. "Work is part and parcel of his personality." Putin sets a "very important" moral example "for all of us, and for Russia in general," Father Tikhon said, by being the first true Christian head of state since the last czar, Nicholas II. (Orthodox leaders view Yeltsin as an atheist, his occasional appearances in church notwithstanding.) And Putin, he continued, stands for national strength: he knows, like Alexander III, that Russia can count only on itself. "Russia has no allies but its weakened army and weakened navy,"

Father Tikhon said with a wan smile. He praised

Putin for taking a necessary stand against Islamic extremism in the northern Caucasus, and suggested that Western society—"weak and decadent," especially in Europe—is not up to the challenge presented by an "aggressive" Islamic culture bent on "world domination."

Just about the only time he bridled in the course of our two-hour talk was when I said that many in the West were coming to view Putin as a traitor to the cause of democracy in Russia. I cited Putin's decision to have regional governors appointed by the Kremlin. "It is a step forward, it is progress," Father Tikhon responded with vehemence. "We should distinguish between two things, democracy and chaos ... These governors are like czars—their power is overwhelming, and with the level of corruption in society, many governors abuse their power." (Many Russians would second this point.) "I am surprised by Western leaders who viewed Yeltsin as a bulwark of democracy and demand going back to his time." He offered an analogy: just as a diver cannot be brought too quickly out of the depths, Russia must gradually adapt to a new form of society.

I had heard from several sources that Putin's inner circle generally views Orthodox belief as a positive attribute for members of the government. I asked Father Tikhon specifically about a Cogolesque tale I had heard regarding Viktor Ivanov, Putin's trusted Kremlin aide who vets candidates for

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appointments to the federal ministries. Someone had told me, I said, that one such candidate was brought to Ivanov in the Kremlin, who asked him his view of the Orthodox Church. The fellow said he had a favorable opinion. If that's so, Ivanov replied, then would he mind being baptized? The fellow said he was willing. Ivanov thereupon called Father Tikhon, got in a car with the candidate, and motored off to have the man baptized. I put it to Father Tikhon: a true story? He offered an enigmatic smile. "Not only members of the government are going through baptism, but a great many others," he replied, adding that adult-size baptismal fonts had become common in churches.

Before I left, I asked Father Tikhon whether he really believed that the Jews had set up the gulag camps. "Everyone set them up," he replied. "But if we look objectively at historical facts, we can see that in the leadership of the gulags were a lot of Jews. After the Revolution the role of Jews in Russia was very special. No one can deny it."

Why would Putin be willing to associate himself, at risk to his reputation, with someone who holds such views? It is sometimes said in Moscow that Putin harbors animosity toward Muslims—but not that he is an anti-Semite. Beryl Lazar notes that Russia under Putin has opened its doors to thousands of Jews who left for Israel during Soviet times but are now petitioning to return.

Reptiles "patrol their borders, and if an alien enters, lunge reflexively." That's as good a description of Putin's behavior toward militants in the Caucasus as any political analyst has offered.

I'm convinced that Putin's religious convictions are genuine. I know strict Orthodox observers who have minutely studied his behavior in church, where his body language could betray him as ill-informed or a casual believer, and he passes their test. As for the vision of Russia that Father Tikhon sketches, a return to what might be called Patriotic Orthodoxy (like the philosophy that guided Russia in pre-revolutionary times), I don't think that is where Putin started out when he took over as president, but I do think it is where he is headed. The notion of a Chekist's coming of age in a culture of enforced atheism and then turning to Orthodoxy as a pillar of his rule is not as odd as it may sound. According to the memoirs of the KGB officer Filipp Bobkov, during Putin's time in the KGB there was a wide-ranging internal discussion "about how destructive the nihilist attitude toward religion was for the country."

I suspect Putin recognizes that Soviet ideology has little appeal to Russians, other than to a dying class of pensioners. But he seems to believe that Patriotic Ortho-

doxy, which—like Soviet ideology—is compatible with a highly centralized state and a strongman ruler, can take root and help morally regenerate the nation. There is also a psychological compatibility: the basic tenet of Patriotic Orthodoxy—that only Russia can help Russia—is akin to his personal conviction that strength comes from within, that he can count only on himself.

Putin is trying to increase his prestige by repairing a fracture in the Orthodox Church that occurred eight decades ago, when a group of anti-Soviet exiles established their own wing, the Orthodox Church Abroad. Putin and Father Tikhon have met with leaders of this group in New York, and a deal is pending that would reunite the church under the umbrella of the Moscow patriarchate, which already ministers to believers in former Soviet republics such as Latvia and Ukraine. This would be a historic triumph for Putin in his ambition to be seen as a consolidator of the Russian nation. Meanwhile, he is jettisoning some of Russia's Soviet baggage in favor of old-Russia symbols. In place of the national holiday that honored the October 1917 Revolution he has established a "Day of National Unity" on the anniversary of a seventeenth-century uprising led by a Moscow prince against Polish invaders who were trying to force Roman Catholicism on Russians.

Father Tikhon told me that Russia is in the throes of a religious revival. Perhaps so. In Moscow last summer crowds in a mile-long line waited for more than three hours to enter the Church of Christ the Savior, near Red Square, to view an especially revered Orthodox icon, the Virgin of Tikhvin, which had been returned after six decades of safekeeping in the United States. For many Russians who came of age in the Soviet period, a turn to Orthodoxy is unlikely; the youth of Russia, however, are another story. A pro-Putin youth group organized by the Kremlin, *Idushie Vmeste* ("Moving Together"), represents a kind of model for how Patriotic Orthodoxy aims to renew Russia. The group is against abortion (Russia has one of the highest rates in the world) and informs recruits about the Orthodox tradition of having large families. Members help at orphanages and hand out small crosses on street corners. The group's recommended-reading list steers clear of edgy post-Soviet writers and instead features reliable old masters such as Pasternak and Chekhov. I dropped in on the group's Moscow headquarters on a visit last spring, and had a pleasant chat with the chief librarian, twenty-year-old Irina Shevalkina. "The Russian national idea is Orthodox, and it is very beautiful," she told me.

The liberal newsweekly *Itogi*, in a recent interview with Valentina Matvienko, a Putin ally who is the governor of St. Petersburg, asked whether it wouldn't be better for Russia to have a parliamentary republic, headed by a prime minister and with no president. "No, this doesn't fit us," Matvienko replied. "We are not ready for such an experiment. The Russian mentality needs a

baron, a czar, a president ... In one word, a boss." When I read that comment, I thought of Stalin, who once said very much the same thing: "The people need a czar whom they can worship and for whom they can live and work."

The idea that a "wild" Russia can be tamed only by a strongman may be a myth, but it is a resonant one, arising in part from Orthodox teaching but also from the "times of trouble" that have periodically plagued this vast land over the centuries. Putin filled a vacuum created by the abrupt Soviet collapse. It could easily have been someone else—he might, in this sense, be called the Accidental Autocrat. No matter: the liberal intelligentsia has come to despise him. "Nothing could be worse than Putin," Anna Politkovskaya, an award-winning Russian investigative journalist, recently told *The Independent* of London. But surely the complaint is as much about Russia as about Putin. For more than two hundred years Russian liberals have been driven to exasperation by Russia's failure to become a second edition of, say, France. And in post-Soviet Russia the liberals have failed to marshal broad popular support for their agenda. Liberalism has become indelibly identified with the trauma and economic crime of the Yeltsin years. The liberal leader Irina Khakamada told me that the following for "decentralized power" and other Western-style liberal policies is no more than 10 or 15 percent of the population. Liberalism's "brief spring" is over, she said.

There are, in any case, possibilities "worse than Putin"—further toward the chauvinistic, authoritarian extreme. Competition comes, for instance, from the Rodina ("Motherland") Party, which was created by the Kremlin to siphon votes away from the Communists but has become a mini-monster in its own right. I paid a visit to one of the party's ideologues, Mikhail Delyagin, a thirty-six-year-old economist. He criticized Putin as a "bourgeois person" who spends too much time on downhill-skiing vacations in Austria. In contrast there was Stalin, "who had Spartan tastes, who wore cheap, inexpensive clothes and darned socks." Still more noxious is the writer Eduard Limonov, who heads the National Bolshevik Party and holds up Slobodan Milosevic as a model leader.

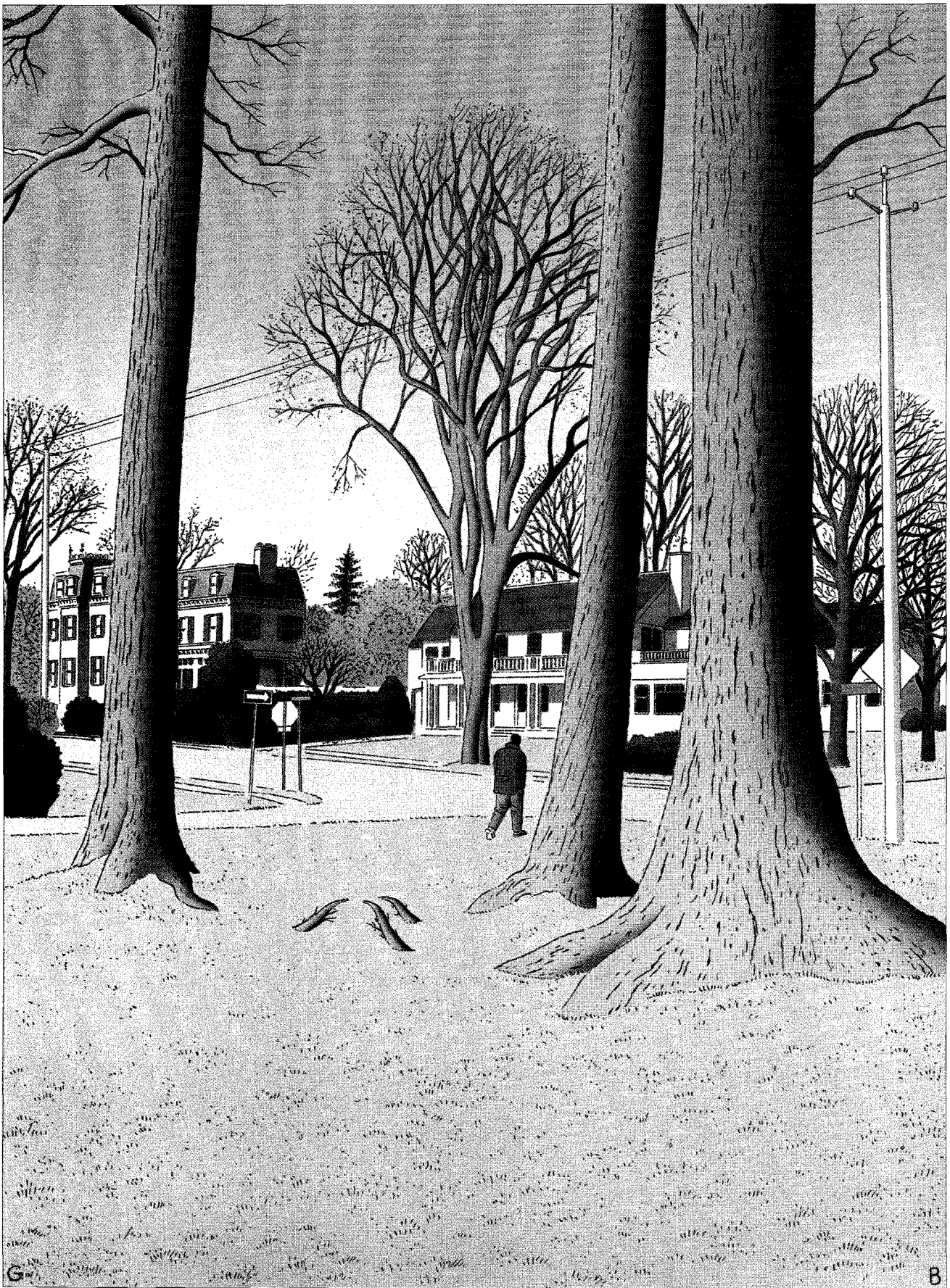
In any event, there is probably little the West can do to persuade Putin to change his course. "Each country looks for the most effective way to organize state power," he said in a November interview on Russian television before leaving for Santiago, where global leaders were gathering for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. In a tête-à-tête on the sidelines of the summit President George W. Bush raised concerns about a concentration of power in the Kremlin. Putin responded with a history lesson on the complexities of political development in Russia. To be a Russian, or at least to be a proud, historically attuned Russian like Putin, is to feel both a certain suspicion of and a certain resentment toward the West. The suspicion, a legacy of the Cold War that is reinforced by Putin's Chekist and

Orthodox mindsets, is that the West (especially America) aims to keep Russia weak. Putin's clumsy intervention in Ukraine's presidential election late last year, on behalf of a pro-Russian candidate, stemmed in part from a belief that the United States and Europe were trying to pull toward their side a country traditionally under Russian economic and political influence. His outlook may strike Westerners as paranoid—but consider the perspective from Moscow. Since the end of the Cold War three former Soviet republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) have joined NATO, and the United States has put military bases in two others (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). Ukraine itself is a future candidate for NATO. "Putin perceives that the West is ganging up on him," Michael McFaul, a veteran Russia watcher at the Washington office of the Hoover Institution, told me.

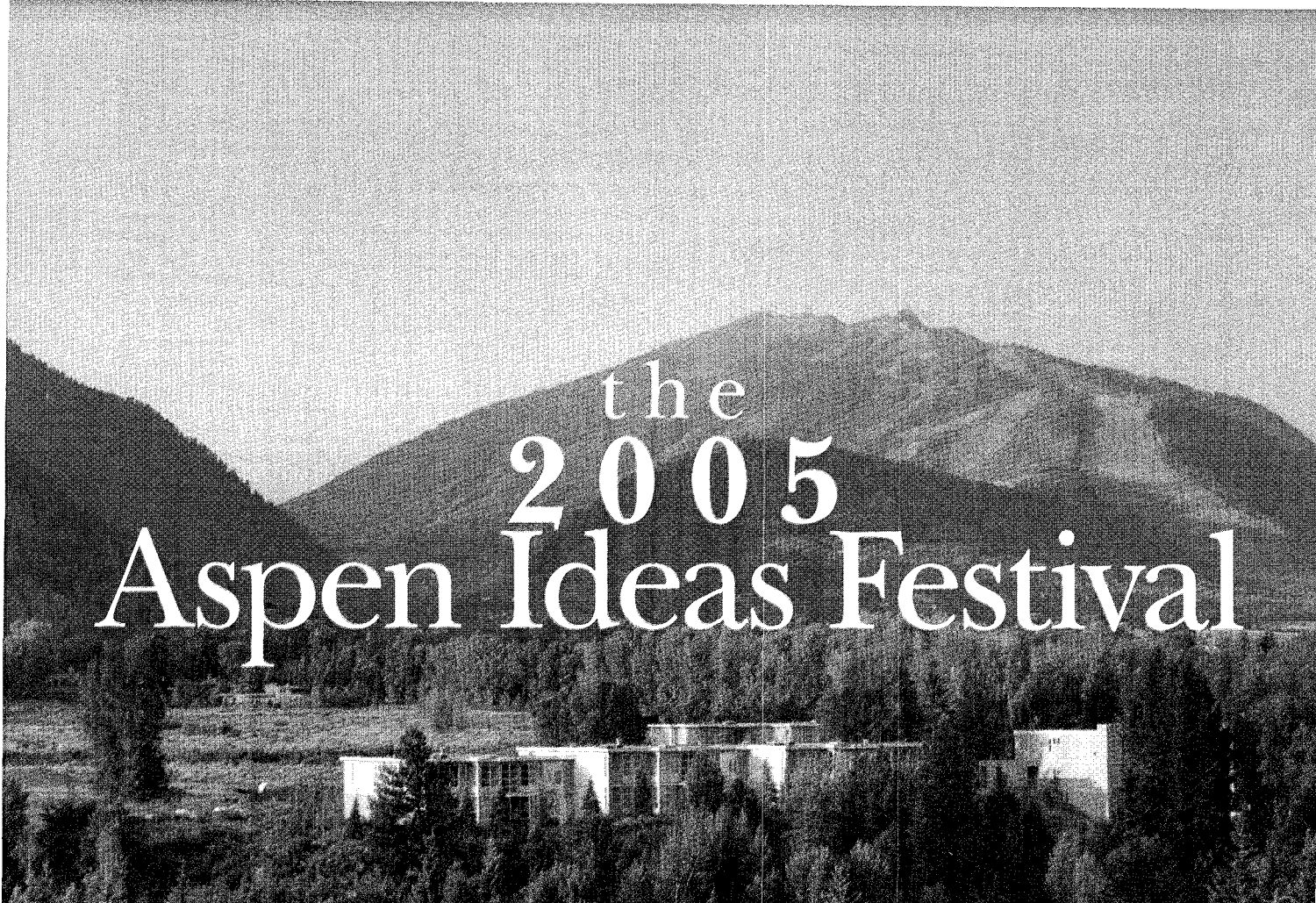
Russia's traditional resentment of the West is more intense and complicated, because it is mixed with envy of higher living standards. As the Russians see things, they turned back Napoleon and turned back Hitler, too, after absorbing his most savage blows—and now they are battling it out on the front lines of the war against Islamic barbarism. And yet the West, Russians observe, persists in instructing them on how to behave. Russia's long-standing sense of unappreciated sacrifice puts a chip on its shoulder but is also, in an odd fashion, a source of patriotic pride. Fate, the Russians tend to think, has dealt them history's heavy work. "Oh, don't speak to me of Austria," the salon hostess Anna Pavlovna says at the outset of *War and Peace*, with Napoleon on the march through Italy. "Russia alone must save Europe."

Russia's constitution limits a president to two four-year terms of office. A much debated question in Moscow is whether Putin will depart at the end of his second term, in March of 2008, or seek to extend his reign through a change in the constitution or some other expedient. Insider opinion is split. Some think he will leave on schedule, with a hand-off to a designated successor, who will face the voters in an election in which the state-run media are all on one side. The public in general, somewhat apathetically, is neither clamoring for him to stay nor bellowing at him to leave. That could change to Putin's detriment if perceptions of corruption in his regime mount, or if the pro-Western "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine gives hope to what has up to now been a weak opposition movement in Russia.

Putin himself, cryptic as ever, is keeping all options open. I asked Brenda Connors, at the Naval War College, for her prediction. If the task-minded Putin thinks his work is not done, she told me, he might try to extend his rule. But she also believes that he is bound to discover that the exercise of the will, which has brought him so far, pays diminishing returns. That sounds right to me. Russia tends to be cruel to its would-be masters. Its abiding harshness creates tough and determined types like Putin, but the country nearly always thwarts them in the end. ▀



MEETING by Guy Billout



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THE TRUTH ABOUT HARVARD

It may be hard to get into Harvard, but it's easy to get out without learning much of enduring value at all. A recent graduate's report

BY ROSS DOUTHAT

Illustration by Tim Bower

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At the beginning of every term Harvard students enjoy a one-week "shopping period," during which they can sample as many courses as they like and thus—or so the theory goes—concoct the most appropriate schedule for their semesters. There is a boisterous quality to this stretch, a sense of intellectual possibility, as people pop in and out of lecture halls, grabbing syllabi and listening for twenty minutes or so before darting away to other classes.

The enthusiasm evaporates quickly once the shopping period ends. Empty seats in the various halls and auditoriums multiply as the semester rattles along, until rooms that were full for the opening lecture resemble the stadium of a losing baseball team during a meaningless late-August game. There are pockets of dichards in the front rows, avidly taking notes, and scattered observers elsewhere—students who overcame the urge to hit the snooze button and hauled themselves to class, only to realize that they've missed so many lectures and fallen so far behind that taking notes is a futile exercise. Better to wait for the semester's end, when they can take exhaustive notes at the review sessions that are always helpfully provided—or simply go to the course's Web site, where the professor has uploaded his lecture notes, understanding all too well the character and study habits of his seldom-glimpsed students.

But during the shopping period the campus bubbles with academic energy. And so Harvard Hall 101 was packed on the February day in 2001, midway through my junior year, when Harvey Mansfield gave the semester's first lecture in "The History of Modern Political Philosophy." Every seat was filled; the overflow jammed the aisles and windowsills and spilled out the door.

It was a good setting for an act of political theater.

Mansfield cuts a distinctive figure on campus, both physically and intellectually. Short and trim, tanned and handsome, with an angular face, bright eyes, and a wide, sharklike grin, he is dapper in an age of professorial slovenliness, favoring fedoras, pastel shirts, and unusual ties.

Ross Douthat is a reporter and researcher for The Atlantic. This article is adapted from his book, Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class, to be published this month by Hyperion.

He is famously conservative, well known for his opposition to affirmative action and gay rights and for his (sometimes cryptic) critiques of feminism and political correctness.

"Before I begin the lecture, I have a brief announcement concerning the class's grading policy," he said that day. "As many of you know, I have often been, ah, outspoken concerning the upward creep of Harvard grades over the last few decades. Some say that this climb—in which what were once Cs have become Bs, and those Bs are now fast becoming As—is a result of meritocracy, which has ensured that Harvard students today are, ah, *smarter* than their forebears. This may be true, but I must tell you that I see little evidence of it."

He paused, flashed his grin, and went on. "Nevertheless, I have recently decided that hewing to the older standard is fruitless when no one else does, because all I succeed in doing is punishing students for taking classes with me. Therefore I have decided that this semester I will issue two grades to each of you. The first will be the grade that you actually deserve—a C for mediocre work, a B for good work, and an A for excellence. This one will be issued to you alone, for every paper and exam that you complete. The second grade, computed only at semester's end, will be your, ah, *ironic* grade—'ironic' in this case being a word used to mean *lying*—and it will be computed on a scale that takes as its mean the average Harvard grade, the B-plus. This higher grade will be sent to the registrar's office, and will appear on your transcript. It will be your public grade, you might say, and it will ensure, as I have said, that you will not be penalized for taking a class with me." Another shark's grin. "And of course, only you will know whether you actually deserve it."

Mansfield had been fighting this battle for years, long enough to have earned the sobriquet "C-minus" from his students, and long enough that his frequent complaints about waning academic standards were routinely dismissed by Harvard's higher-ups as the out-of-touch crankiness of a conservative fogey. But the ironic-grade

announcement changed all that. Soon afterward his photo appeared on the front page of *The Boston Globe*, alongside a story about the decline of academic standards. Suddenly Harvard found itself mocked as the academic equivalent of Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average.

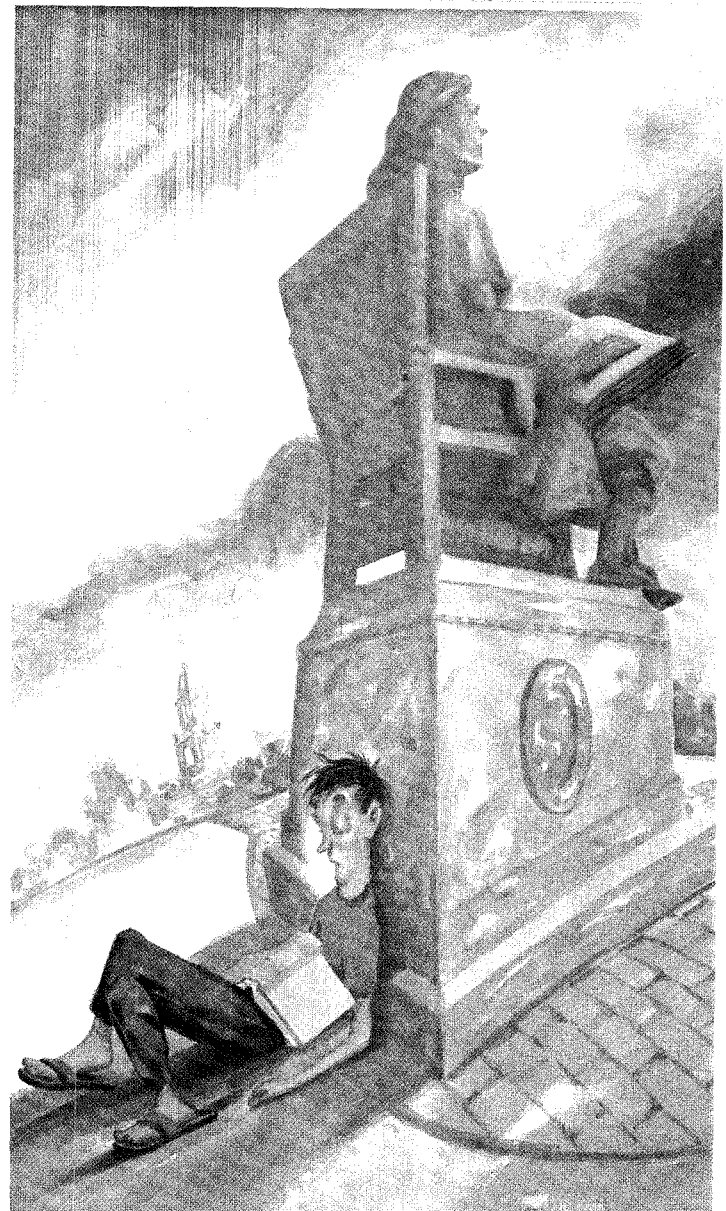
This was somewhat unfair—if only because, as the article made clear, Harvard was hardly alone. Still, its numbers were particularly staggering. More than 90 percent of the class of 2001 had earned grade-point averages of B-minus or higher. Half of all the grades given the year before were As or A-minuses; only six percent were C-pluses or lower. By way of comparison, in 1940 C-minus was the most common GPA at Harvard, and in 1955 just 15 percent of undergraduates had a GPA of B-plus or higher.

What lay behind this trend? Writing in the college newspaper, the *Crimson*, Mansfield posited some historical factors. "Grade inflation got started ... when professors raised the grades of students protesting the war in Vietnam," he argued. "At that time, too, white professors, imbibing the spirit of the new policies of affirmative action, stopped giving low grades to black students, and to justify or conceal this, also stopped giving low grades to white students." (As you might imagine, this theory was hotly contested.) But the main culprit now was simply this: "The prevalence in American education of the notion of self-esteem." Mansfield wrote, "According to that therapeutic notion, the purpose of education is to make students feel capable and 'empowered,' and professors should hesitate to pass judgment on what students have learned."

This may be partly true, but I think that the roots of grade inflation—and, by extension, the overall ease and lack of seriousness in Harvard's undergraduate academic culture—run deeper. Understanding grade inflation requires understanding the nature of modern Harvard and of elite education in general—particularly the ambitions of its students and professors.

The students' ambitions are those of a well-trained meritocratic elite. In the semi-aristocracy that Harvard once was, students could accept Cs, because they knew their prospects in life had more to do with family fortunes and connections than with GPAs. In today's meritocracy this situation no longer obtains. Even if you could live off your parents' wealth, the ethos of the meritocracy holds that you shouldn't, because your worth as a person is determined not by clan or class but by what you do and whether you succeed at it. What you do, in turn, hinges in no small part on what is on your résumé, including your GPA.

Thus the professor is not just a disinterested pedagogue. As a dispenser of grades he is a gatekeeper to worldly success. And in that capacity professors face upward pressure from students ("I can't afford a B if I want to get into law school"); horizontal pressure from their colleagues, to which even Mansfield gave way; downward pressure from



the administration ("If you want to fail someone, you have to be prepared for a very long, painful battle with the higher echelons," one professor told the *Crimson*); and perhaps pressure from within, from the part of them that sympathizes with students' careerism. (Academics, after all, have ambitions of their own, and are well aware of the vicissitudes of the marketplace.)

It doesn't help that Harvard students are creatively lazy, gifted at working smarter rather than harder. Most of my classmates were studious primarily in our avoidance of academic work, and brilliant largely in our maneuverings to achieve a maximal GPA in return for minimal effort. It was easy to see the classroom as just another résumé-padding opportunity, a place to collect the grade (and recommendation) necessary to get to the next station in life. If that grade could be obtained while reading a tenth of the books on the syllabus, so much the better.

Sometimes you didn't have to do even that much. One of the last papers I wrote in college was assigned in "The American West, 1780–1930." The professor handed out two journal articles on the theory and practice of "material his-

tory”—essentially, historical research based on the careful analysis of objects. We were told to go to the Peabody, Harvard’s museum of archaeology and ethnology, where the professor had set out three pairs of objects from the frontier era. One object in each pair had been made by Indians, one by Europeans, and we were to write a ten-page paper that compared the objects in a given pair. Aside from the articles on material history and a general text, *North American Indian Jewelry and Adornment*, we were to use no sources.

I picked a Sioux war club and an American revolver with its carrying case. As I stood in the museum taking notes, the assignment seemed impossible. How could I eke out ten pages when I knew nothing about the provenance of the weapons or the significance of their markings?

Sitting at my desk two weeks later, I realized I had been wrong. The paper was pathetically easy to write—not despite the dearth of information but *because* of it. Knowing nothing meant I could write anything. I didn’t need to do any reading, absorb any history, or learn anything at all.

Some excerpts give the flavor of what I came up with.

Chief Running Antelope’s war club is less a weapon than a talisman of supernatural power ... The club’s red paint and eagle feather link the weapon and its holder to sacred, invisible worlds; the “H. A. Brigham” inscription, a 19th century version of the modern logo, reinforces the revolver’s connection to a capitalist order in which weapons are mass-produced, rather than individually crafted ... The case is clearly an impractical method of *carrying* the gun ... it is, rather, an eminently practical method of *displaying* a gun, with the paradoxical corollary that the gun is displayed by *not* being displayed ... The book-like case, with its gold leaf and intricate images, transforms the gun by containing its potential for violence ...

By the time I had finished, I almost believed it. My professor must have too: the paper got an A.

Not every class was so easy. Those that were tended to be in history and English, classics and foreign languages, art and philosophy—in other words, in those departments that provide what used to be considered the meat of a liberal arts education. Humanities students generally did the least work, got the highest grades, and cruised academically, letting their studies slide in favor of time-sucking extracurriculars, while their science- and math-minded classmates sometimes had to struggle to reach the B-plus plateau.

The theory is often advanced that grade inflation is worst in the humanities because grading English essays and history papers is more subjective than marking problem sets and lab reports, and thus more vulnerable to student pressure and professorial weakness. There is a teaspoon of truth to that claim, I suppose. But I think the problem in the humanities, as with grade inflation in general, can be traced to the roots of elite America—and specifically to the influence of the free market.

Attempting to explain the left-wing biases of his Harvard colleagues, the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick once hypothesized that most professors oppose capitalism because they consider themselves far smarter than boobish businessmen, and therefore resent the economic system that rewards practical intelligence over their own gifts. I’m inclined to think that such resentment—at least in money-drunk America—increasingly coexists with a deep inferiority complex regarding modern capitalism, and a need, however unconscious, to justify academic life in the face of the fantastic accumulation of wealth that takes place outside the ivory tower.

Many humanities professors seem to believe they have nothing to offer students who don’t plan to be historians, or literary theorists, or philosophers. They make no effort to provide a liberal arts education to future doctors and bankers.

If I am right, some areas of academic life aren’t vulnerable to this crisis of confidence in the importance of one’s work. Scientists can rest secure in the knowledge that their labors will help shove along the modern project of advancing health—and wealth. Abstruse genomic work could one day yield *in utero* engineering; mucking around with chemicals could produce a cure for AIDS, or the next Viagra.

Then there is economics, the new queen of the sciences—a discipline perfectly tailored to the modern market-driven university, and not coincidentally the most popular concentration during my four years of college. It’s also no coincidence that economics was the only department at Harvard in which the faculty tilted to the right, at least on issues of regulation and taxation. (Martin Feldstein, who taught Economics 10, Harvard’s most popular class, was an economic adviser to President Ronald Reagan.) To tilt to the right is in some sense to assert a belief in absolute truth; and the only absolute truth that the upper class accepts these days is the truth of the market.

The humanities have no such reservoirs of confidence. And attempts by humanities professors to ape the rigor of their scientific colleagues have led to a decades-long wade in the marshes of postmodern academic theory, where canons are scorned, books exist only as texts to be deconstructed, and willfully obscure writing is championed over accessible prose. All this has merely reinforced capitalism’s insistence that the sciences are the only important academic pursuits, because only they provide tangible, quantifiable (and potentially profitable) results.

Far from making the humanities scientific, postmodernism has made them irrelevant.

The retreat into irrelevance is visible all across the humanities curriculum. Philosophy departments have largely purged themselves of metaphysicians and moralists; history departments emphasize exhaustive primary research and micro-history. In the field of English there is little pretense that literature is valuable in itself and should be part of every educated person's life, rather than serving as grist for endless academic debates in which every mention of truth is placed in sneering quotation marks.

Sure, historians believe in their primary sources, English scholars in their textual debates, philosophers in their logic games. But many of them seem to believe that they have nothing to offer students who don't plan to be historians, or literary theorists, or philosophers. They make no effort to apply their work to what should be the most pressing task of undergraduate education: to provide a general education, a liberal arts education, to future doctors and bankers and lawyers and diplomats.

In this environment who can blame professors if, when it comes time to grade their students, they sometimes take the path of least resistance—the path of the gentleman's B-plus?

One might expect Harvard's Core Curriculum to step into the breach. But the Core is a late-1970s version of a traditional liberal arts curriculum, and it's even worse than that description makes it sound. It has long been an object of derision among students (during my junior year the *Crimson* called it a "stifling and stagnant attempt" at a liberal arts education), and a curricular-review committee recently joined the chorus, observing dryly that the Core "may serve to constrain intellectual development" and recommending that it be replaced with "a new system of general education." (Harvard's faculty will begin voting on the committee's recommendations this spring.) At its inception, in 1978, the Core was seen as a less elitist alternative to the Great Books programs offered at Columbia and other universities. It has no universally required courses, mandating instead that students take, at some point before graduation, at least one class in seven of eleven areas—areas whose titles and subject matter *sound* suitably comprehensive. They include Literature and Arts, Historical Study, Science, Foreign Cultures, Quantitative Reasoning, Moral Reasoning, and Social Analysis.

But although these subject areas are theoretically general, the dozen or so classes offered annually in each of them (nearly all Core courses are designed for the Core) tend to be maddeningly specific and often defiantly obscure. The Core makes no attempt to distinguish between "Understanding Islam and Contemporary Muslim Societies" and "Tel Aviv: Urban Culture in Another Zion" in terms of importance; either will satisfy the Foreign Cultures requirement. For Science a student might choose

"Human Evolution"—or he might choose "The Biology of Trees and Forests" or "Dinosaurs and Their Relatives." For his Social Analysis requirement he might decide to study basic economic principles in Martin Feldstein's Ec 10—or he might take "Food and Culture" or "Psychological Trauma" or "Urban Revolutions: Archaeology and the Investigation of Early States." And for Literature and Arts he might decide to take Helen Vendler's wide-ranging course "Poems, Poets, Poetry"—but then again, he might be drawn to "Women Writers in Imperial China: How to Escape From the Feminine Voice."

This is not to denigrate the more whimsical and esoteric choices that fill out a course catalogue. A computer-science major, his head spinning with lines of code, might be well served by dipping into "The Cuban Revolution: 1956–71: A Self-Debate." But under Harvard's system that might easily turn out to be the only history class he takes. It seems deeply disingenuous, at best, to suggest that in the development of a broadly educated student body the study of Castro's regime carries the same weight as, say, knowledge of the two world wars, or the French Revolution, or the founding of America. (During my four years at Harvard the history department didn't offer a single course focusing on the American Revolution.)

As if in reply to this complaint, the Core's mission statement asserts, with a touch of smugness, that "the Core differs from other programs of general education. It does not define intellectual breadth as the mastery of a set of Great Books, or the digestion of a specific quantum of information ... rather, the Core seeks to introduce students to the major approaches to knowledge in areas that the faculty considers indispensable to undergraduate education."

These words, which appear in the course catalogue each year, are the closest that Harvard comes to articulating an undergraduate educational philosophy. They suggest that the difference in importance between, say, "Democracy, Development, and Equality in Mexico" and "Reason and Faith in the West" (both offerings in Historical Study) does not matter. As the introduction to the history courses puts it, both courses offer a "historical" approach to knowledge that is presumably more valuable than mere "facts" about the past. Comprehending history "as a form of inquiry and understanding" trumps learning about actual events. The catalogue contains similarly pat introductions to the other disciplines. In each case the emphasis is squarely on methodology, not material.

My experience of the Core was probably typical. I set out with the intention of picking a comprehensive roster of classes that would lead me in directions at once interesting and essential, providing perspectives that were unavailable in my concentration: American history and literature. The first Core course I wandered into—"Concepts of the Hero in Greek Civilization"—proved to be spectacular, notwithstanding its nickname, "Heroes for Zeroes." It was a survey

course with a twist, in which an enthusiastic professor took an initially reluctant crowd of students on a whirlwind tour of the classics, with assists from contemporary films such as *Blade Runner* and *When We Were Kings*.

During the next three years I sought other courses that offered what this one had: Great Books and great teaching. What I found were unengaged professors and overburdened teaching assistants who seemed to be marking time until they could return to the parochial safety of their departmental classes. Indeed, parochialism often overtook even the broadest-sounding Core classes. "Understanding Islam" involved only cursory analysis of the Koran, the history of Islamic civilization, and the rise of radical Islam, but devoted weeks to Muslim diaspora communities in London and Muslim-animistic syncretism in Africa. I chose another class, "The Portrait," because it seemed likely to offer something of a crash course in art history. And for the first few weeks it did, focusing on E. H. Gombrich's comprehensive *The Story of Art*. The rest of the time, however, was devoted to police photography in nineteenth-century France, sexual fetishism in Victorian daguerreotypes, aboriginal head-shrinking ... The list goes on, but I didn't: by the middle of the semester I had stopped going to the lectures.

The few Core classes that are well taught are swamped each year, no matter how obscure the subject matter. The closest thing to a Harvard education—that is, to an intellectual corpus that most Harvard graduates have in common—is probably obtained in such oversubscribed courses as "The Warren Court and the Pursuit of Justice," "First Nights: Five Performance Premieres," and "Fairy Tales, Children's Literature, and the Construction of Childhood."

A Harvard graduate may have read no Shakespeare or Proust; he may be unable to distinguish Justinian the Great from Julian the Apostate, or to tell you the first ten elements in the periodic table (God knows I can't). But one need only mention "Mass Culture in Nazi Germany" or "Constructing the Samurai" and his eyes will light up with fond memories.

As in a great library ravaged by a hurricane, the essential elements of a liberal arts education lie scattered everywhere at Harvard, waiting to be picked up. But little guidance is given on how to proceed with that task.

I remember vividly the moment late in my high school senior year when Harvard's course catalogue arrived in the mail. It was a doorstop of a book, filled with descriptions of hundreds, maybe thousands, of classes. I pored over it, asking myself how I could choose just thirty-two classes, four years' worth, from the sea of fascinating choices.

Harvard never attempted to answer that question—perhaps the most important question facing any incoming freshman. I chose my classes as much by accident as by design. There were times when some of them mattered to

me, and even moments when I was intoxicated. But achieving those moments required pulling myself away from Harvard's other demands, whether social, extracurricular, or pre-professional, which took far more discipline than I was usually able to exert.

Mostly I logged the necessary hours in the library and exam rooms, earned my solid (if inflated) GPA and my diploma, and used the rest of the time to keep up with my classmates in our ongoing race to the top of America (and the world). It was only afterward, when the perpetual motion of undergraduate life was behind me, that I looked back and felt cheated.

As in a great library ravaged by a hurricane, the essential elements of a liberal arts education lie scattered everywhere at Harvard, waiting to be picked up. But little guidance is given on how to proceed with that task.

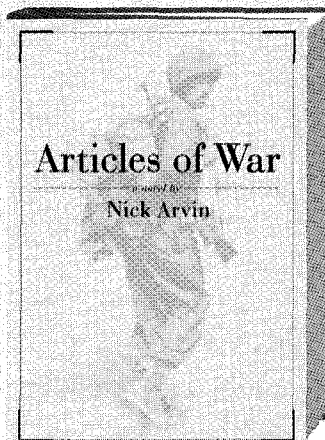
Afterward, too, I began chuckling inwardly when some older person, upon discovering my Harvard affiliation, would nod gravely and ask, But wasn't it such hard work?

It was—but not in the way the questioner meant. It was hard work to get into Harvard, and then it was hard work competing for offices and honors and extracurriculars with thousands of brilliant and driven young people; hard work keeping our heads in the swirling social world; hard work fighting for law-school slots and investment-banking jobs as college wound to a close ... yes, all of that was heavy sledding. But the academics—the academics were another story.

Whatever nostalgists think, there was never a golden age when students did all their work and attended every lecture. When Aquinas held forth in Paris, and Heidegger in Freiburg, lazy undergraduates were doubtless squirreled away in their rooms, frantically skimming other people's notes to prep for the final exam. What makes our age different is the moment that happened over and over again at Harvard, when we said *This is going to be hard* and then realized *No, this is easy*. Maybe it came when we boiled down a three-page syllabus to a hundred pages of exam-time reading, or saw that a paper could be turned in late without the frazzled teaching fellow's docking us, or handed in C-quality work and got a gleaming B-plus. Whenever the moment came, we learned that it wasn't our sloth alone, or our constant pushing for higher grades, that made Harvard easy.

No, Harvard was easy because almost no one was pushing back. ▀

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE BOOK SENSE Independent Bookseller Recommendations

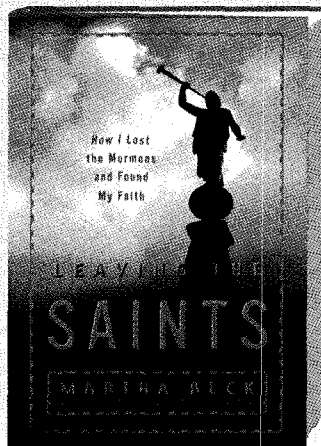


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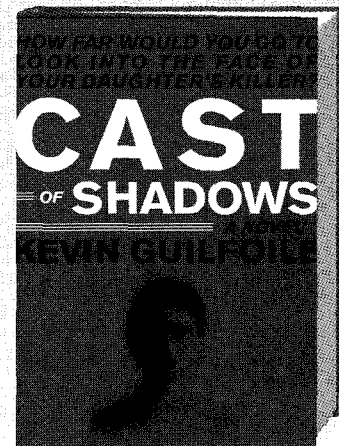


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—Jean Ann Robinson, Full Circle
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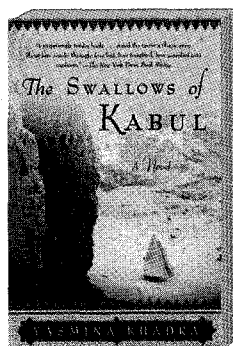
CAST OF SHADOWS
A NOVEL
BY KEVIN GUILFOILE

KNOPF: \$24.95

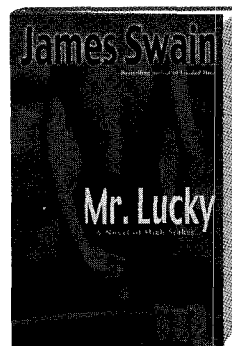
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BOOKS & CRITICS

MARCH 2005 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

The London Look: Fashion From Street to Catwalk

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Harvard Rules

by Richard Bradley

The Glorious Cause

by Robert Middlekauff

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The Life of Graham Greene, Volume III 1955–1991

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The Three-Martini Playdate

by Christie Mellor

Confessions of a Slacker Mom

by Muffy Mead-Ferro

Cheap Psychological

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From Here to Maternity: The

Education of a Rookie Mom

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The War for Muslim Minds:

Islam and the West

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READING LIST:

One Great Book Per Life

Writers who said it all to perfection in a single book and then most decently died
by Allan Gurganus

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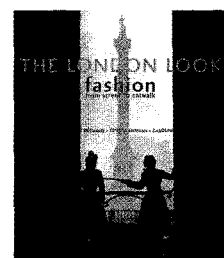
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Clothes-Minded

What to read this month

BY BENJAMIN SCHWARZ

In their dogged efforts to appear edgy and with-it, academics and scholarly publishers have over the past fifteen or so years ventured into increasingly glamorous and seemingly incongruous areas of investigation. The results carry more than a whiff of the pretentious (one recent NYU Press book “places rap music, the *Alien* trilogy, and Sandra Cisneros in the context of postcolonialism, identity politics, and technoculture”), but academe’s newfound interest in fashion is a more or less delightful development. To be sure, a lot of the studies are just godawful, and the titles even worse (*Don We Now Our Gay Apparel: Gay Men’s Dress in the Twentieth Century*; *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*), but a few are quite smart, and most important, they have terrific photographs. Britain’s Berg Publishers, an academic house that puts out the journal *Fashion Theory* (which runs such articles as “A Note: Gianni Versace’s Anti-Bourgeois Little Black Dress”), and Yale University Press are the leading publishers in the field. Yale’s are by far the most sumptuous books; its lavish and discerning *The Corset: A Cultural History* (2001), by *Fashion Theory*’s editor, Valerie Steele, sold like soft porn for the high-minded. (Sartorial scholars are fixated on that article of clothing as much, one suspects, for prurient reasons as for the predictable ideological debate it engenders: symbol of fun if fettered sexuality, or of patriarchal Procrusteanism?) This latest addition to the publisher’s list, a beautifully illustrated and surprisingly ambitious book, examines the design, production, and retailing of fashionable dress in London from 1800 to the present. It’s part of a crop of titles that put fashion in the context of urban history, economics, and geography—a project not as ludicrous as it might first appear (the rag trade, after all, is New York’s third largest employer, and any social and cultural map of London would include the mods of Carnaby Street and the King’s Road, the East End’s “sweated industries,” Bond Street’s boutiques, Savile Row’s bespoke tailors, Jermyn Street’s shirt makers, and St. James’s Street’s boot makers and hatters). But London has long occupied a peculiar and economically minuscule



THE LONDON LOOK:
FASHION FROM STREET
TO CATWALK

by Christopher Breward,
Edwina Ehrman,
and Caroline Evans

Yale

place among the fashion capitals, which makes the authors' task a good deal more complicated than that which confronted Steele in her *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History*, or Caroline Rennolds Milbank in her *New York Fashion: The Evolution of American Style*, or Nicola White in her study of Milan, *Reconstructing Italian Fashion*. Moreover, unlike previous books that comprehensively examined London's fashion scene (yes, there are at least two others: Andrew Tucker's lively and useful *The London Fashion Book* and Christopher Breward's more academic *Fashioning London*), this one, as its title suggests, explicitly makes the difficult argument that there's a distinctive London style, with continuities extending back two centuries. Obviously, the place to begin making this case is the traditional—archaic, really—family firms of the bespoke trade, which have long given well-heeled London men clothes characterized by “functional solidity” combined with “understated but exquisite detail,” which “discouraged crude imitation,” as Breward nicely puts it here. (Although fashion history almost invariably means the history of haute couture, this book refreshingly and appropriately heeds men's fashions; after all, as Rudolph Valentino's wife explained in 1923 after rushing in tow as her husband manically shopped the West End, “London is to men what Paris is to women—the paradise of fashion shops.”) Fashion writers often make too much of the influence of the time-honored in London style, but nonetheless, an Anderson and Sheppard suit, a Hawes and Curtis shirt, and John Lobb brogues exemplify a kind of urban sophistication—though they're rooted in an aristocratic heritage, and therefore in rural pursuits. Paradoxically, the metropolitan style was long determined and is still partially defined by a group—the upper-middle and upper class—peculiarly obsessed with an active country life. That group has long contributed a restrained practicality and (at best) a liveliness that militates against the decorative preciousness always threatening to infect high fashion. To me, the



COURTESY OF YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. TOP RIGHT: HENRY GRANT COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF LONDON



The VISITS of VERONICA

Clockwise from top left: Gown by Norman Hartnell, 1920s; Teddy boys, 1953; “Peachy” dress by Mary Quant, 1960; Marshall & Snelgrove catalogue, 1929

apogee of London style isn't its most publicized era, the swinging sixties (although Mary Quant's cool but iconoclastic, playfully elegant early designs epitomize the best of the London look), but, rather, the mid-1920s through the mid-1950s, wisely detailed in two gorgeous chapters here, when Digby Morton, Hardy Amies, Norman Hartnell, Peter Russell, and Victor Steibel created a strongly identifiable London style based on impeccable tailoring united with a sophisticated bounciness. Even photographed on tailors' forms (alas, nearly all the stunning garments in the book are pictured in this static way), the clothes are striking for their jaunty refinement. The designers were traditionalists (Amies, who, incongruously, later designed the costumes for *2001: A Space Odyssey*, said of the emerging Italian designers that they had "somewhat dubious taste—dubious because there was no real sense of tradition behind them"), but they were cosmopolitan and so at ease with tradition that they could have fun with it.

However, as the authors rightly emphasize, from the fops of the Regency period through the gents and swells of the 1850s and 1860s, the aesthetes of the 1890s, the New Edwardians and their working-class counterparts—South and East London's Teddy boys—of the 1950s, the mods and Chelsea dandies of the 1960s, and the punks and glam-rock-inspired Blitz kids of the 1970s, a swaggering theatricality has been at least as distinctive an element of the London style as traditionalism. Not surprisingly, with the exception of the mods—who had distinct female and male looks (and whose female numbers famously catwalked up and down the King's Road near Quant's boutique)—and the more or less unisex punks, the peacocking has been a male activity, and since the early nineteenth century men's fashion in this class-bound society has been marked by extraordinary social fluidity (although, consistent with their strong sense of class identity, the lower classes appropriated the styles of the upper classes on their own terms, rather than merely imitating them).

Today the city's influential and strikingly uncompromising fashion scene lurches between liveliness and an unlovely swagger, a fact for better and worse largely attributable to what Breward calls "London's unique provision for fashion education." The city's remarkable number of important art and design colleges is probably the most significant factor in defining today's London look—and it's a feature of the city's fashion scene that represents an enormous break with the past. Probably no city in the world turns out more talented designers every year, and the fashion houses in Paris and New York hire bushels of them annually. But in those firms what Evans calls "a more conservative in-house ethos" strongly tempers the young designers' edge. In London those designers' ubiquity engenders a consistently experimental and provocative attitude—the city is unquestionably the most creatively open fashion center, which means it's sometimes playful (as with Stella McCartney's winsome, floaty, yet refined slip dresses, not pictured here) but is too often self-consciously daring. So while the rest of the world looks to London for fashion inspiration, many of the creations are uncommercial. London fashion is famously "pure," which makes it admirable or obnoxious, depending on how one looks at it. Probably the most renowned young London designer, Alexander McQueen, may be original, but he's far better known for his over-the-top, high-concept (and message-y) showmanship than for the beauty of his designs. (The older John Galiano, the other most famously innovative London designer of the past decade and now, of course, chief designer at Christian Dior, was also notorious for his absurdly extravagant shows, in the 1990s, but when it came to the clothes themselves, he often coupled whimsy, a quintessential if increasingly rare mark of London style, with precision tailoring.) In this environment, and lacking the Continent's system of long apprenticeships, more and more of London's young designers adopt ever more outrageous postures to get attention. For all the book's understandable emphasis

on traditionalism, that quality is today, ironically, a far more creative force in Paris's large houses—whose stylishness was customarily contrasted with the conservatism of English fashion.

As much a cultural as an aesthetic history, this book is fascinating and great fun. But I have a quibble: How can Evans possibly characterize Vivienne Westwood's 1990s designs (which creatively drew on historical forms, but in a manner that was often parodic and frequently campy) as "straightforwardly romantic"? And one major objection: The book includes historical footwear, but makes no mention and contains not a single photograph of the work of the great contemporary London shoe designers Georgina Goodman, Jimmy Choo, and Manolo Blahnik, the last of whom is indisputably the most renowned shoe designer of the past twenty years. He'll be forever remembered, if not for the legendary workmanship, fit, and charm of his creations, then for his comment on Madonna: "You have to admire her—she hides her lack of talent so well."

GROVES OF ACADEME

Harvard Rules, by Richard Bradley (HarperCollins). This detailed if not necessarily reliable picture of the intrigue and controversies that surround Larry Summers's presidency of Harvard is gossipy and kind of trashy but wholly compelling—a *Sex and the City* for the Northeast-corridor elite (now, there's an unappealing concept). While engrossed in it despite my scruples, I found two dicta coming to mind: (1) Just because someone's a charmless bully doesn't mean he's not often right, and (2) "University politics," to quote Henry Kissinger, "are vicious precisely because the stakes are so small." (I guarantee, that quotation will appear in every review of this book.)

AMERICAN HISTORY

The Glorious Cause, by Robert Middlekauff (Oxford). First released twenty-three years ago, this book, just published in an expanded and thoroughly revised edition, remains

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the best one-volume history of the American Revolution, and among the best narrative American histories of the past half century. Those who are drawn to the current bunch of flaccid and overrated lives of the Founders should turn instead to this masterpiece. It's more briskly and smartly written (Middlekauff's sentences advance swiftly and surely from point to point; his pithiness invigorates every paragraph), and readers will learn from it that large and complex political, ideological, and military issues can be compellingly elucidated in narrative form without being reduced to biography. This 735-page book, which covers the period from the Stamp Act crisis to the ratification of the Constitution, is a feat of concision. In addition to writing an authoritative account of the battles and campaigns, and of the political maneuvering and debates in the colonies and London that precipitated and defined the conflict and determined its aftermath, Middlekauff adeptly dissects subjects ranging from British political culture to eighteenth-century infantry tactics to public finance to the relationship between the revolutionaries' Protestant heritage and their conceptions of rights and politics. Although most of the material Middlekauff has added relates to social history, this remains an unabashedly old-fashioned work, with the focus squarely on politics, constitutionalism, and war (in fact, Middlekauff's most important addition is his synthesis of the current research on the British "fiscal-military state"). This work in its revised form embodies the scholarship of two generations and demonstrates a mastery of the historian's craft that is from all evidence extremely rare. This was the first book to appear in a projected eleven-volume series, *The Oxford History of the United States*, begun more than *forty* years ago. When the series was already far behind schedule its editor forecast that it would be finished by 2000, but only three other volumes have been published since Middlekauff's. Not one of the titles will have been written by the historian to whom it was originally assigned.

(By the way, in this revision Middlekauff draws heavily on an even better narrative historical synthesis—Paul Langford's breathtaking and brilliant *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783*, a volume in *The New Oxford History of England*.)

Rather than imposing shape and focus, the current, faddish doorstop biographies of the Founders pile on needless detail. In contrast, Edmund Morgan's slim (ninety-page) and polished ***The Meaning of Independence*** (Virginia), which is composed of pen portraits of John Adams, Washington, and Jefferson, in two cases fully takes the measure of its subjects. There's simply no better way of comprehending Washington and Adams than reading this book, which has been reissued in an updated edition. Morgan subtly captures Washington's greatest and most mysterious strength, his aloof charisma, which is probably why when the Organization of American Historians asked 1,500 scholars to name the ten best books on Washington, this thirty-two-page chapter was among the works selected. Morgan completely grasps Adams—he's deeply fond of him while not exactly admiring him, which is pretty much always the case with those we know intimately. Morgan ingeniously uses the inner struggle Adams waged throughout his political life, between his lofty ambition and his petty vanity, to reveal the man; his explication of how in deliberately ending his political career Adams "crushed his vanity but satisfied his ambition" is a most moving and humane appraisal of the interplay of personality and politics. In his final portrait, of Jefferson, Morgan stumbles. The third president clearly leaves him cold, and although his study is intelligent and perceptive, Morgan can't fathom Jefferson, who is an exquisitely complicated figure and a famously elusive quarry. Still, Morgan is a supremely artful historian. Masking his commanding authority (in this and in his other books) is a puckish ease and an utterly smooth prose style that manages to be at once conversational and incisive. ■

Benjamin Schwarz is the literary editor and the national editor of The Atlantic.

BOOKS

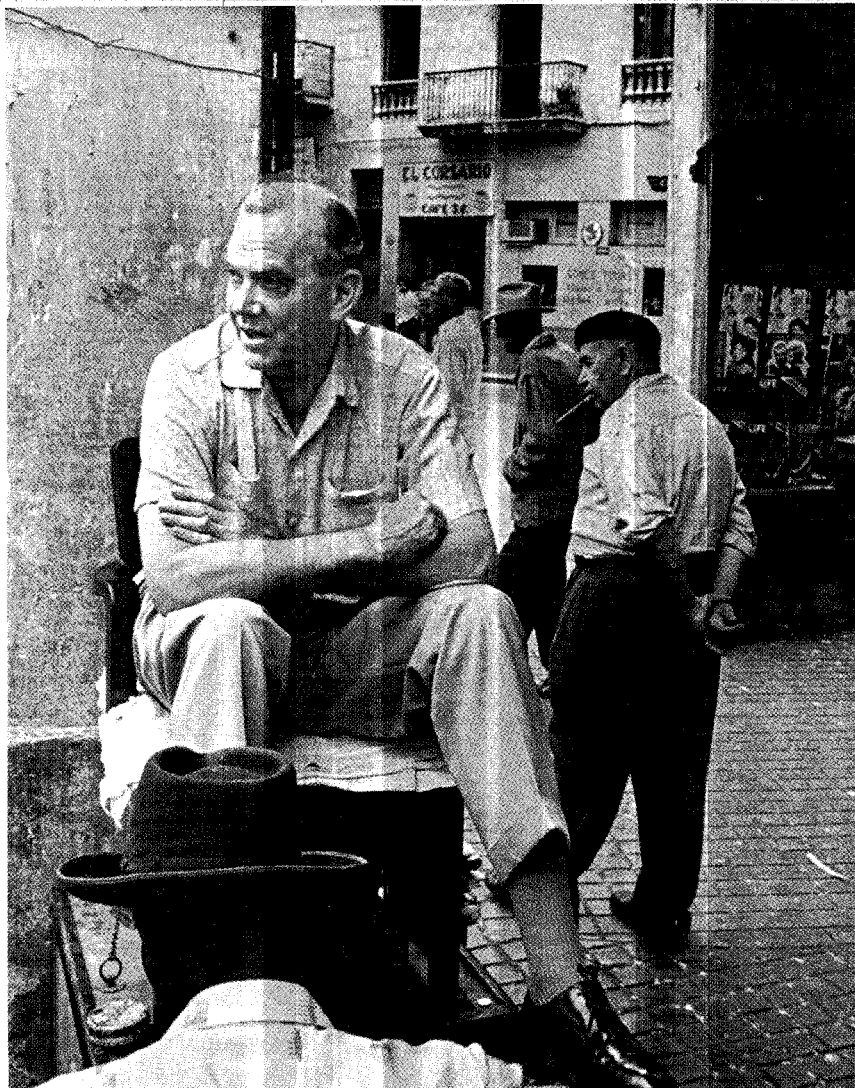
I'll Be Damned

Graham Greene's most fervent loyalty was to betrayal

BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Graham Greene once wrote a celebrated essay about a *doppelgänger* who cared enough to haunt and shadow him, even to masquerade as him. This "other" Greene appeared to have anterior knowledge of the movements of his model, sometimes showing up to grant an interview or fill a seat in a restaurant, so that Greene himself, when he arrived in some old haunt or new locale, would be asked why he had returned so soon. The other man was suitably nondescript yet camera-shy. He was caught once by a society photographer, and captioned in the press into the bargain, but a combination of flash and blur allowed him to escape unmasking. So who or what was he? *Semblable*? *Frère*? Or perhaps *hypocrite lecteur*?

This mode of imitation or emulation or substitution—at once a form of flattery and a species of threat, or at any rate of challenge—was and is analogous to the role that Greene himself played and still plays in the lives of many writers and readers. A journalist, most especially an Anglo-American travel writer, will run the risk of disappointing his editor if he visits Saigon and leaves out any reference to quiet Americans, or turns in a piece from Havana that fails to mention the hapless Wormold. As for Brighton, or Vienna, or Haiti—Greene was there just before you turned up. Leaving the *Orient Express*, you will glimpse the tail of a raincoat just at the moment when that intriguing and anonymous fellow passenger vanishes discreetly at the end of the platform. In Mexico or Sierra Leone some old veteran will mumble something about the stranger in the off-white suit who was asking the same questions only a while back. On one of my first ventures as a foreign correspondent, in 1975, I sat in the garden bar of a *taverna* in Nicosia, reading about the adventures of Dr. Saavedra in *The Honorary Consul*, visualizing what I



had just seen along the haunted "Green Line" that slashed through the ruins of the city, and moaning with relief that Graham Greene had never been to Cyprus. Even so, as I crossed that same border in the broiling noon of the next day and heard only the cicadas and the click of the rifle bolts at the frontier, I was composing a letter to him in my mind.

It was a matter not just of place but of character. Disillusioned diplomat whose wife was drying up before his unseeing eyes? Snake-eyed cop? Priest to whom Eden was forever lost? Sentimental terrorist spokesman? All these went straight into the notebook. You could divide the eager freelances into roughly three types: those who had been influenced by *Scoop*, those who were stirred by *Homage to Catalonia*, and those who took their tune from *The Quiet American*. Overlap with Le Carré fans was frequent in the third instance: their preferred quarry was the naive guy at the U.S.

embassy, insufficiently comprehending of the ancient hatreds and millennial routines that had been so quickly mastered by the old/new hands.

Greene's centennial year, just now past, saw the reissue of many of his classics in beautiful new editions from Penguin Books, along with publication of the third and closing volume of Norman

Sherry's biography. In an effort to isolate and identify the elusive and evasive figure who could so plausibly be impersonated—to lay his ghost, so to speak—I set myself to reading it all. I think that what sur-

prised me the most, when I had finished, was his sheer conservatism.

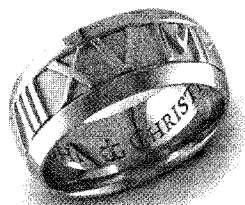
Greene, after all, was nothing if not radical, even subversive, in his self-presentation. Always at odds with authority, not infrequently sued or censored or even banned, a bohemian and a truant, part exile and part émigré, a dissident Catholic and a sexual opportunist, he personified the fugitive from

THE LIFE OF
GRAHAM GREENE,
VOLUME III
1955-1991

by Norman Sherry
Viking

JOHN CHRISTIAN

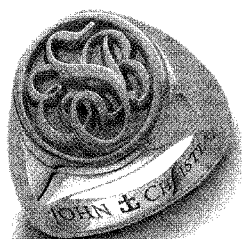
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN



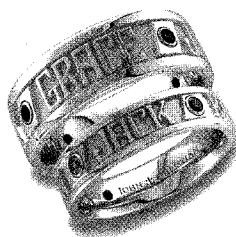
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the public school, Foreign Office, rural and suburban British tradition in which he had been formed. By what means did this pinkish roué gradually mutate into a reactionary?

The first and easiest reply is: By means of the sameness of his plot formula. This tends to consist of a contrived dilemma, on the horns of which his characters arrange to impale themselves with near masochistic enthusiasm. Dear God, shall I give him/her up, for your sake? Or might it be more fun to wager my immortal soul? The staginess and creakiness of all this was well netted by George Orwell, himself no stranger to the sweltering locale and the agonies of moral choice, in his review of *The Heart of the Matter* for *The New Yorker* in 1948. Of the central character he asserted,

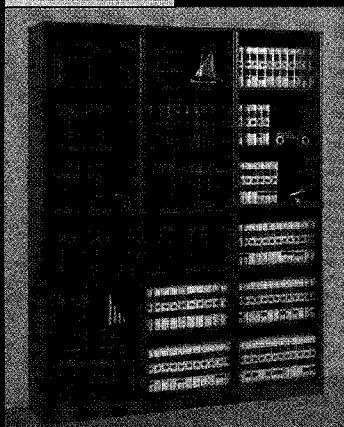
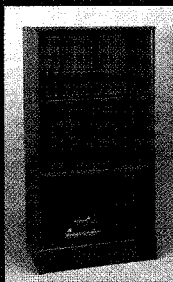
Scobie is incredible because the two halves of him do not fit together. If he were capable of getting into the kind of mess that is described, he would have got into it years earlier. If he really felt that adultery is mortal sin, he would stop committing it; if he persisted in it, his sense of sin would weaken. If he believed in hell, he would not risk going there merely to spare the feelings of a couple of neurotic women. And one might add that if he were the kind of man we are told he is—that is, a man whose chief characteristic is a horror of causing pain—he would not be an officer in a colonial police force.

I have always found *The End of the Affair* to be a sickly business in rather the same way, in that Sarah Miles, who might have continued being a perfectly good mistress as well as a more than adequate wife, decides to spoil everything for everybody—not by any means exempting herself—on the basis of an off-the-cuff promise to God. This resolution doesn't even result from an "answered prayer," since the crucial event on which she stakes everything (the sparing of her lover, Maurice Bendrix, during a Nazi air raid on London) has actually taken place by the time she troubles deaf heaven with her bootless cries.

These and other quasi-morality tales are all informed, it is needless to say, by Greene's own Catholicism (though one notices that he never ven-

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tures far beyond adultery or murder or espionage, or confronts a really harsh topic such as abortion). There is every reason to think that he enjoyed playing a version of the game in his own life: he originally converted to the faith in order to wear down the long resistance of a woman—his first wife, Vivien—who essentially refused to sleep with him until he had been “received” into Holy Mother Church. (For some reason this reminds me of Jessica Mitford, who decided at the last minute *not* to say, when asked at her naturalization hearing why she wanted to become an American citizen, that the Communist Party of the USA would not otherwise allow her to join.) In a rather defensive manner Greene later in his life complained when reviewers laid any stress on the predominance of Catholic themes and characters in his work; any novel about English people and society that did not contain some Catholics, he wrote, would be to that extent lacking in “verisimilitude.” Notice that he did not choose to say “realism”; how likely is it, after all, as J. M. Coetzee inquires in a superb new introduction to *Brighton Rock*, that the depraved and deprived “Pinkie” and his wretched, slum-bred girl would both be so intimately familiar with the Latin forms? “*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi*” ... the repetition throughout is like that other “toll,” of a continuous knell. But the dramatic convenience of such characters is this: they consign themselves to an eternity of torment while being fully aware that they are doing so. When Rose says to Pinkie, “We’re going to do a mortal sin,” she says it “with a mixture of fear and pride.” This, by the way, is how she knows that it is to be her wedding day.

For Pinkie, meanwhile (not otherwise detectable as a reflective type), the same counter-redemptive ceremony merely consummates the ephemeral matter of “his temporal safety” in return for “two immortalities of pain.” “He was filled with a kind of gloomy hilarity and pride. He saw himself now as a full-grown man for whom the angels wept.” But Pinkie is not left without consolation. He can take pleasure only from giving or receiving pain, and his mind constantly returns to the

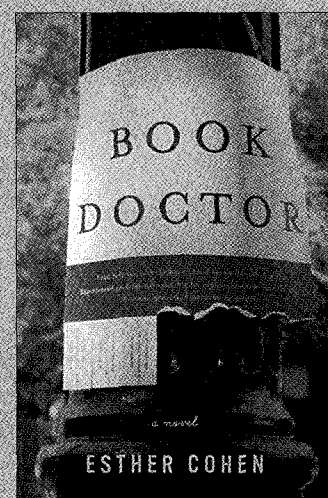
schoolroom dividers with which he learned, before graduating to razors at the racetrack, to be a torturer and a maimer. We know from his memoirs that Greene was lavishly and inventively bullied and tortured while he was at school, and if we did not know this we could certainly guess. In *The Heart of the Matter*, published a decade later, the comparatively conscience-stricken Major Scobie is having a bad moment with his scrawny and tedious mistress and notices that “she was like a child with a pair of dividers who knows her power to injure.” But by then, in the course of an equally bitter and arid moment with his wife, he has heard himself saying (this time in English, for some reason): “O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world.” It must be said for Greene that he didn’t trouble his non-Catholic readers with any very complex renditions of the liturgy.

On the other hand, or as against that, he did trouble such readers with reflections like this. Scobie encounters a fellow colonialist named Perrot at a disaster-stricken border station that divides British-held Sierra Leone from its neighboring Vichy colony. Perrot hands him a drink and says, in an accent that is cartoonishly Scots, “Of course ye know I find it hard to think of the French as enemies. My family came over with the Huguenots. It makes a difference, ye know.” Greene continues,

His lean long yellow face cut in two by a nose like a wound was all the time arrogantly on the defensive: the importance of Perrot was an article of faith with Perrot—doubters would be repelled, persecuted if he had the chance ... the faith would never cease to be proclaimed.

So at last we meet a Graham Greene character who keeps up his faith despite a torrid Conradian setting, but he is openly jeered at—because he is of Protestant provenance. A ruined Irishman expiring among the empty flagons and exhaling an *Ave Maria* would be sympathetic. But a righteous, continent Huguenot, never. (Incidentally, since the Huguenots were driven from France to England after a shocking pogrom sponsored by both throne and clergy, the identification with France itself, let

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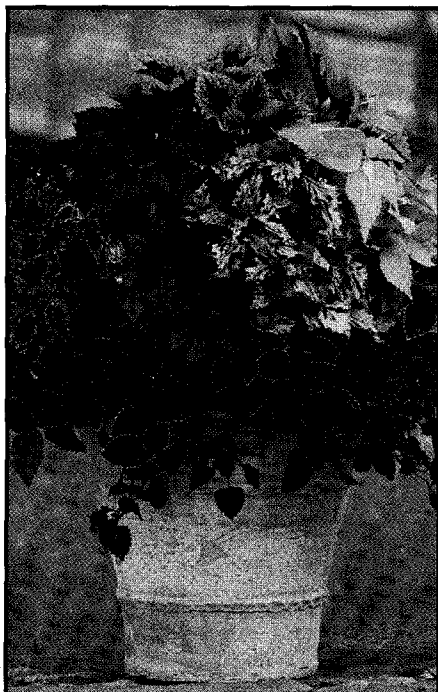
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alone with Catholic Vichy, seems a bit like blaming the victim.) Perrot is further scorned for speaking sarcastically about events in Freetown, the capital of humble Sierra Leone.

The words “big city” came out with a sneer—Perrot couldn’t bear the thought that there was a place where people considered themselves important and where he was not regarded. Like a Huguenot imagining Rome, he built up a picture of frivolity, viciousness and corruption.

This seems doubly ungenerous when considered in the light of the epigraph from Leon Bloy with which Greene opened *The End of the Affair*: “Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence.” Is this creative agony available only to those who believe in transubstantiation?

To be fair to Greene, whose answer to that question was fairly obviously in the affirmative, one must admit that he extended the same indulgence to one other group: the Communists. His two best-drawn heroes in this category, both noble men facing insuperable odds, are Doctor Magiot, in *The Comedians*, and Dr. Czinner, in *Orient Express*. (Here might be the place to say that I contributed an introduction to the latter for the new Penguin series.) The theme of martyrdom is constant, even with these secular materialists. “For a moment, Dr. Czinner”—confronted in a railway compartment—“flattened himself against the wall of a steep street to let the armoured men, the spears and the horses pass, and the tired tortured man. He had not died to make the poor contented, to bind the chains tighter; his words had been twisted.” This is the observation of what later became known as “liberation theology” (something that, incidentally, seems to have fallen from view lately), and one notes in passing that “Czinner” is a not very artful name for a fallen Everyman.

Greene had briefly been a Party member while at Oxford, and although he was too intelligent and too prudent to remain a true adherent for long, he kept up a residual form of Catholic fellow-traveling until the end of his life.

In 1967 he wrote a celebrated letter to the London *Times*. Its ostensible purpose was to join the protest against the imprisonment of two Russian writers, but its main effect was to qualify that protest by stating the following: “If I had to choose between life in the Soviet Union and life in the United States of America, I would certainly choose the Soviet Union, just as I would choose life in Cuba to [sic] life in those southern American republics, like Bolivia, dominated by their northern neighbor, or life in North Vietnam to life in South Vietnam.”

Greene never had to make this choice, if only because he was often refused a visa for the United States and never “chose” to spend much time in the Soviet Union. He did, however, keep up a lifelong friendship with a permanent resident of that latter state, Kim Philby. Perhaps the most ruthless and successful espionage agent of the entire Cold War, Philby had actually risen to be a senior British intelligence officer and a colleague trusted by James Angleton, of the CIA, while acting as a dedicated agent of the KGB. Greene contributed the introduction to Philby’s Soviet-edited memoir, *My Silent War*, in which he wrote, “He betrayed his country—yes, perhaps he did, but who among us has not committed treason to something or someone more important than a country?” Leave aside that “perhaps.” This, with its sanctimonious echo of “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone,” also recalls E. M. Forster’s hope that he would “have the courage” to betray his country before his friends. This itself was almost as morally slippery as the original “casting the first stone” injunction: in any case, Philby, who sold out the colleagues he had trained himself, certainly betrayed both. Norman Sherry records that Greene lost his temper only once in the course of all their interviews—when Sherry pointed this out.

If betrayal is the motif of so many Greene novels, then its cousin treason was the motif of Kim Philby’s entire life. In that sense alone Philby might have made the ideal friend for Greene. But that still left open the question of whom he had betrayed. It was surely more Greene’s gentle native England than the wicked, vulgar United States. But to this

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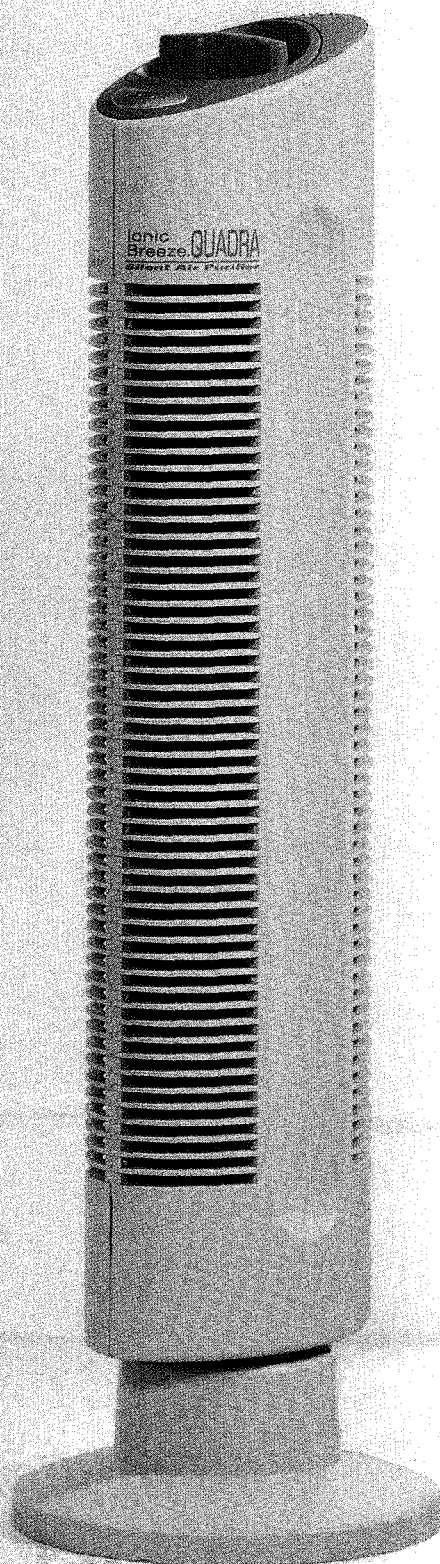
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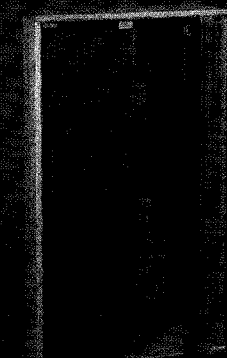
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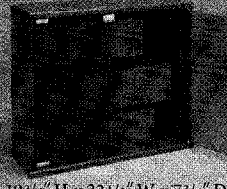
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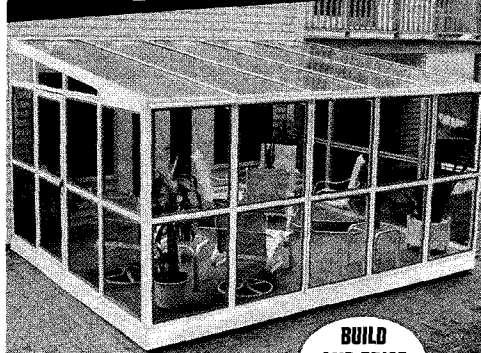
Greene had a sort of reply ready. In the English past it had been considered "treasonous" to be a Roman Catholic. Official persecution was the underside of Elizabethan England. Many fine men, like Father John Gerard, had been slandered and tortured for their disloyalty (which happened to take the form of working for Catholic potentates on the mainland in order to prepare for an invasion). So strongly did Greene identify with these reactionary subversives that he became a Shakespeare-hater, accusing the national bard of being an accomplice in repression, if only a silent one. In a public address in Hamburg, accepting a Shakespeare prize from some well-meaning but unknowing academics, he astonishingly referred to John of Gaunt's dying speech about "this England" as "complacent" and pointed out that it was first published in 1597: "Two years before, Shakespeare's fellow poet Southwell had died on the scaffold after three years of torture. If only Shakespeare had shared his disloyalty, we could have loved him better as a man."

That was bad history as well as bad literary criticism. If Shakespeare had become an agent of the Vatican and King Philip of Spain, he would not have been a successful playwright in a flourishing and relatively uncensored Protestant London. (The obtuseness of Greene is increased rather than diminished when we appreciate the considerable scholarship suggesting that Shakespeare probably came from a Catholic family that had decided to practice the religion in secret, and that it was this, if anything, that explained his reticence on the matter.) Greene was very fond of his own professed attachment to the underdog. In that same lecture he asserted that "[the writer] stands for the victims, and the victims change." In *Our Man in Havana* we find that "there was always another side to a joke, the side of the victim." Simplicity here demands simplicity in return. Simply put: Is someone an underdog who aligns himself with an absolutist papacy, or with the state security services of the USSR?

It was *The Quiet American*, far more than any other novel, that gave Greene his still-enduring reputation for pre-

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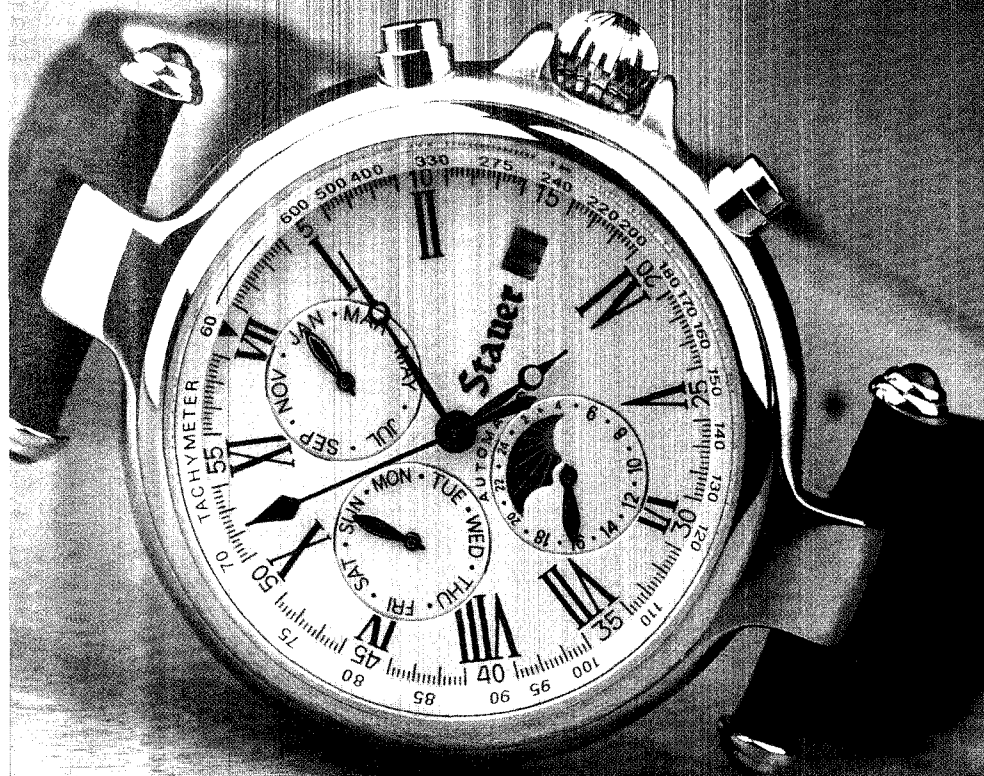


science. Had he not, in the figure of Alden Pyle, encapsulated the combination of American arrogance and naiveté that eventuated in the “quagmire” of Vietnam? The novel was published in 1955, shortly after the shattering defeat of French arms at Dien Bien Phu, and this coincidence made its acuity appear almost uncanny. Yet who was it who had written this, in 1952?

The Indo-Chinese front is only one sector of a long line which crosses Korea, touches the limits of a still-peaceful Hong Kong, cuts across Tongking, avoids—for the moment—Siam, and continues into the jungles of Malaya. If Indo-China falls, Korea will be isolated, Siam can be invaded in twenty-four hours and Malaya may have to be abandoned.

This almost absurdly crude statement of the “domino theory” was published by Graham Greene in *Paris Match*. It can be found in his *Reflections*, under what I consider to be the suggestive title “Indo-China: France’s Crown of Thorns.” If you re-read *The Quiet American* today, you will see that it blames the blundering Americans largely for failing to understand or to emulate the sophisticated French style of colonialism in Vietnam. For many of us the original sin—if I may annex that term—of the American intervention was precisely its inheritance of a doomed French war. For Greene, rather, it was the failure to *live up to* that legacy. Whatever this was, it was not a revolutionary or radical position. And it seems to have been content to overlook quite a few “victims.”

But however frenziedly inconsistent he was on everything else, Greene was unwaveringly hostile to the United States. When, in the closing volume of his biography Norman Sherry gets to the publication of *The Comedians*, in 1966, he says of the Smith couple therein depicted: “At last, sympathetic Americans in a Greene novel.” Well, that Mr. and Mrs. Smith have some sterling qualities is beyond doubt. But they are represented as culpably and laughably unworldly, obsessed with vegetarianism and abstention from alcohol. (Protestants, in fact.) They are, further, quite unable to see the horrors of the Duvalier regime, reluctant as they are to be



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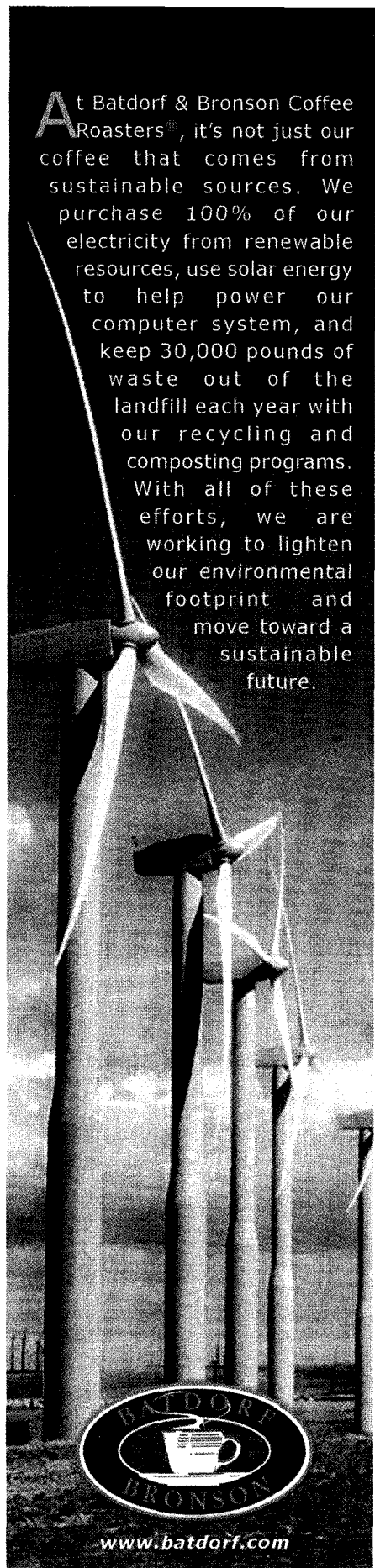


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too “judgmental” about anything for which black people can be blamed. This satire upon their innocence was rather clever of Greene, I always thought, because he was able to borrow the fatuous apologetics of the anti-American fellow-traveler and, so to speak, transfer it to an American target.

This element in Greene’s prose needs no guilt-sodden, sweat-stained policeman to hunt it out. In more than one published reminiscence and interview he told of the seminal influence of *The Pirate Aeroplane*, an adventure story written by Captain Charles Gilson and read by Greene in early boyhood, in which an avaricious American airman, cheroot between his teeth, violates and plunders a lost civilization. Even in *Travels With My Aunt*, one of his lightest and wittiest books, Greene’s narrator passes through Paris and achieves an understated masterpiece of condescension by saying, “I noticed a plaque which tells a visitor that here La Fayette signed some treaty or celebrated his return from the American revolution, I forget which.”

Sherry’s work is so replete with absurd and sinister remarks by Greene on his own un-Smith-like travels as a tourist of revolution in the Caribbean and Latin American zone that one could fill this page with balls-aching propagandistic remarks that impeached him out of his own mouth. It was unfortunate for “Papa Doc” Duvalier that he went so far as to be denounced for heresy by the Catholic Church: this licensed a full-out attack on him by Greene, even if the successor regime in Haiti, the “Baby Doc” nightmare, did receive the endorsement of the Holy See and of Mother Teresa. Of Fidel Castro, Greene would not hear an ill word spoken; he even differed with Kenneth Tynan and other sympathizers on the point and chose to celebrate (as I strongly suspect Tynan would not have) the then warm relations between Fidel and the papal nuncio. In 1987, with two years left to go in the life of Soviet communism, Greene turned up in Moscow and made the following speech at some “peace” conference or other:

We are fighting together against the death squads in El Salvador. We are fighting together against the *Con-*

tras in Nicaragua. We are fighting together against General Pinochet in Chile. There is no division in our thoughts between Catholics—Roman Catholics—and Communists.

That may have been during the Gorbachev period, but he had been doing this sort of thing ever since the 1950s, when he indulged the Stalinist regime in Poland because it maintained a Catholic front organization called Pax Christi. Yet if we are charitable, and admit that there was a pulse of humanism under all this piffle (who, after all, except for some very dogmatic and often Catholic conservatives, will say a good word for the *contras*, or Pinochet, or the death squads?), this still leaves us empty-handed when it comes to General Manuel Noriega, of Panama. Greene obviously liked Panama as a country, and may have had some justification for his friendship with Omar Torrijos, a mediocre personality even as depicted in *Getting to Know the General* but quite possibly a man of some charm. Noriega, however, was purely and merely a sadist and a thief. He may not have instigated the murder of Torrijos (though Norman Sherry seems to implicate him in this crime), but he most certainly arranged the kidnapping, torture, and killing of one of Panama’s most distinguished dissidents, Dr. Hugo Spadafora. The good doctor might have been a Greene hero if he had occurred in a different political context, but as it was Greene took the side of the oppressor, even telling an interviewer after the dictator’s deposition in 1989, “I hope General Noriega will harass the invaders from bases in the mountains.” In one of his last novels, *Monsignor Quixote*, Greene has an old priest and an old Communist rambling around Spain in a beat-up car and exchanging likable platitudes about the nature of (and the similarity of) their faiths. But what is quixotic about wishing an extension of life and power to a fascistic zombie like Noriega?

The term “anti-American” is a loose one, and loosely employed. My own working definition of it, admittedly a slack one also, is that a person is anti-American if he or she is consistently contemptuous of American culture and furthermore supports any opponent of

ONE GREAT BOOK PER LIFE

Writers who said it all to perfection in a single book and then most decently died

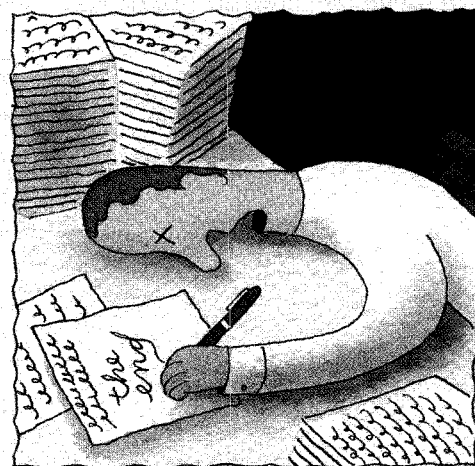
BY ALLAN GURGANUS

William Langland (late fourteenth century). The work of this greatest English poet before Chaucer still bursts with the energy of a Brueghel wedding dance. Little is known about Langland himself (a hired church singer?), but he gives us the Creation Myth as seen from below-stairs. Like other single books by obsessed and isolated authors, Langland's narrative poem, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman*, aspires to contain merely everything: now allegory, now almanac, a list of cures, a compendium of low jokes slung alongside the purest silver-white religious aspiration. It still offers us scope, forgiveness, genuine animal laughs. As our present political reality darkens toward fundamentalist tribal warfare that can leave us feeling daily more medieval, this medieval poem illumines itself as a consolation. Permeable in its clear wishes, gorgeous in its humane and unapologetic belief, it reassures us that the Seven Sins aren't actually Deadly.

G. B. Edwards (1899–1976). Guernsey, one of Britain's Channel Islands, considers itself mainly French. Here Victor Hugo was exiled for fifteen years among fisher-folk speaking their Francophile patois. Here Gerald Basil Edwards was born, the son of quarry owners, proud of his gypsy blood. He earned a scholarship on the mainland, where he married, sired four children, then disappeared. Retiring from the civil service to that English port nearest his beloved Guernsey, Edwards planned devoting his last years to a trilogy of island novels. He finished only one, *The Book of Ebenezer Le Page* (1981), but it reads like Beethoven's Ninth. It charts island life from 1890 to 1970, including the German wartime occupation. In it, weather, darkness, hunger, blood-connectedness, shelter, and an almost painfully keyed-up sexual desire appear in odd, magical proportions never found in any novel conceived off-island. Coated with sea salt, its crannies spilling wildflowers, Edwards's book still roars like some huge shell held, cutting, against your ear.

William Emmanuel Bugg (1848–1935). To justify its high-cost living, every life is worth examining. And Farmer Wm. Bugg's

existence seemed (to him at least) worth a spunky daily pencil jotting. *Journals of William Emmanuel Bugg, 1848–1935* (1986) reveals one rustic fellow as funny as strict. He noted every penny spent and most eggs laid. This North Carolinian loved freak-show carnivals; he ranked each church meeting's level of hellfire and music, after counting all the pretty girls present. His literary style might be called "early hotel register." Hurricanes are endured, even enjoyed, in ten words. Crops planted on page 80 get harvested on 99. Amid haiku-ed floods and lightning bolts, so many local deaths are recorded it's a wonder Bugg had one neighbor left. And yet his work offers ten thousand moments lit by joy. Diary pages are expunged after the appearance of a particularly lovely girl he squired home from church. Whether Bugg's excisions contained prayers for the girl's favors or petitions for his own



strength in resisting these, such passages grow erotic in absentia and are much missed. What Bugg leaves us is a bone-plain portrait at once endearing, scary, and all but godly in its tenderness toward the muddiest of ordinary days.

Giuseppe di Lampedusa (1896–1957). Married to an analyst trained by Freud, the Duke of Palma and Prince of Lampedusa fled their shared palazzo each morning as his wife's first patient arrived. He repaired to a favorite trattoria, where he read Latin and Joyce, dining all day in peace. His dowager mother considered novel-writing "middle-class," and who can argue

that? But in 1954, while attending a literary banquet awarding his cousin some minor poetry prize, Lampedusa was finally moved to write a book based on the life of his womanizing amateur-astronomer great-grandfather. It would chronicle the aristocracy's faltering hold on half a century's Sicilian history. What the prince left us is a great comic novel, more in the spirit of Waugh than the usual praise-song to one's own gilt genealogy. *The Leopard* (1958) was submitted anonymously (hence proving the prince's true nobility). It became—after his death, alas—the best-selling novel of postwar Italy, outraging Marxists. This masterpiece remains a pitiless love poem to the ever dying, never dead aristocracy. Tart and suave with its author's sexy big-cat ego, it is the greatest work by and about someone titled.

(1900–1949). Born pretty, pointy, fairly rich, she attended Smith College till a black student sat right beside her in class. Hurrying home by train, Peggy soon became a "local-color society stringer" for *The Atlanta Journal*. She presented herself as a "typical flapper," assuring others of her wildness (though it seems to have included a stubborn virginity). After marrying a fellow journalist who insisted she give up the newspaper game, she amused her bright, restless self by starting a novel meant to portray her famously strong-minded country grandmother. Patterned on Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, the novel (and Peggy's Victorian hypochondria) sidelined her for years. When the book became 1936's best seller, winning the Pulitzer, she was doomed to spend the rest of her foreshortened life answering

letters from every fan who idly pestered or praised her. A southern deb's obligation did the poor woman in: thank-you notes became her death sentence—a final work far longer than her first. As she jaywalked across a busy intersection with her invalid husband, Atlanta's traffic grew too spooky. Diving Scarlett-like to save herself, she alone was struck by a taxi. Even so, she'd written one novel that created and then retired at least four classic "types." But tomorrow, actually, would not be another day.

Allan Gurganus is the author of the novels *Oldest Living Confederate Widow*, *Tells All*, and *Plays Well With Others*, the story collection *White People*, and *The Practical Heart: Four Novellas*.

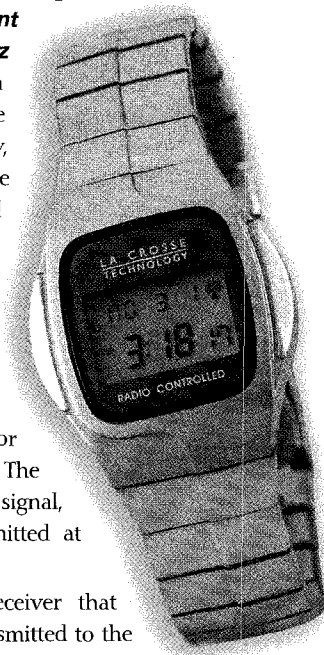
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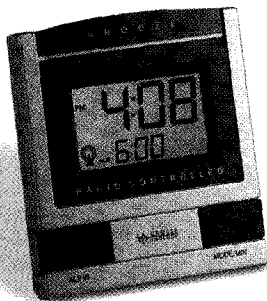
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U.S. policy, whoever this may be. And if an author accuses America of being insufficiently colonial in Vietnam, and lives long enough to endorse a Noriega resistance in Panama, he meets the qualification. That such a position should also be so largely "faith-based" is not as much of an irony as it might seem—not in the age of globalized (but of course anti-"globalization" and anti-American) *jihad*.

It is an irony, however, that Greene should have spent so much of his career trying to adapt himself to that most singularly American of the arts, the cinema. The distinction he made in his fictions—between novels and "entertainments"—was one that he first evolved to excuse himself for writing an openly catch-penny movie script in the form of *Orient Express*. A few years later, in 1937, he composed an essay on the film industry in which he claimed, "The poetic cinema, it is worth remembering, can be built up on a few very simple ideas, as simple as the idea behind the poetic fictions of Conrad: the love of peace, a country, a feeling for fidelity." In the same essay he chose to laud the cinematic honesty of D. W. Griffith.

Even his rivals and critics grant him a facile "I am a camera" skill. Evelyn Waugh conceded that with Greene's prose "the affinity to the film is everywhere apparent ... it is the camera's eye which moves." J. M. Coetzee adds,

In *Brighton Rock* the influence of Howard Hawks can be felt in the handling of the violence at the race-track; the ingenious use of the street photographer to advance the plot suggests Alfred Hitchcock. Chapters characteristically end with the focus being pulled back from human actors to the greater natural scene—the moon over city and beachfront, for instance.

These filmic qualities are, to put it not much higher, well-made clichés. So, for that matter, are the virtues "love of peace, a country, a feeling for fidelity." But Greene managed to betray all those, too. His many lost and exhausted and discredited causes need not evoke much nostalgia in us, but it is somehow fitting that his most lasting impression should be a celluloid one. ▀

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic* and a columnist for *Vanity Fair*.

BOOKS

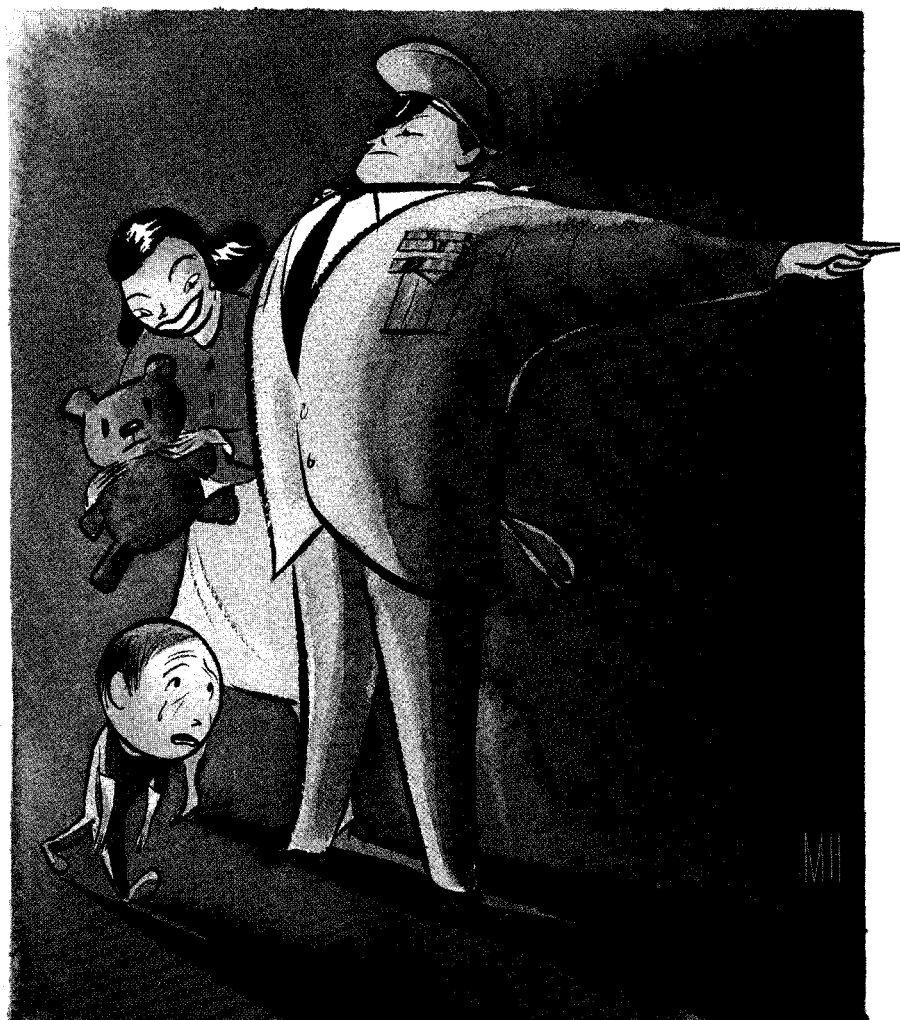
Marshal Plan

The age of parents as friends is over

BY SANDRA TSING LOH

At some point, which is to say the late 1990s, the focus of parenting shifted almost entirely away from preparing kids for, among other things, the dangers, responsibilities, and unpredictability of life. Or, it's just possible to imagine, parents decided that children's self-esteem was the best defense against an unkind world, and so they set about—while they still could—staging a million *Truman Shows* to ensure outcomes that were never less than validating for their little ones. Well, buckle your seat belts: the backlash is here. Those non-authoritarian, all-validating, all-encouraging, all-active, all-listening, all-providing, never-raise-a-voice-in-anger, teach-don't-punish, feel-good moms and dads now rate all the respect of yesterday's bees in a *Saturday Night Live* sketch. Today's cutting-edge parents manipulate, threaten, deprive, ignore, spank, and get mad and scream at their children, and—why not?—drink. Yes, colorful Frank McCourt characters “J” us. Or so one might conclude from a spate of recent titles celebrating defiantly underachieving parents, including Christie Mellor's *The Three-Martini Playdate*, Muffy Mead-Ferro's *Confessions of a Slacker Mom*, Beth Teitell's *From Here to Maternity*, and—the one I waited for on order with actually bated breath, its title so resonated with me—Perry W. Buffington's *Cheap Psychological Tricks for Parents*.

To track how the pendulum swung so far that it actually did a fairground loop, it's helpful to recall the archetypal—and in practice, widely emulated—nineties parenting guide *Becoming the Parent You Want to Be*, by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser. To begin with, as its epic, Vision Quest-like title suggests, it is a tome, which confidently anticipates an audience that will share the joys of its leisurely pace. Picturing the ideal reader for this book leads to



visions of a sunlit deck in the woods, a pot of tea, a sisal basket of sharpened pencils, a workbook, frequent massages during the seminar week, and lots of time for spontaneous breakout sessions.

Anyway, Chapter 1 of *Becoming* begins not with something useful, such as tips on how to deal with biting (for that you'll have to trek to page 249), but with a personal-values assessment called “Nine Principles for the Parenting Journey.” Even when tough subjects are eventually broached, however, the wisdom is not quick-fix. Here's one part of *Becoming's* seventeen-part strategy on dealing with tantrums:

Remind yourself that tantrums are a measure of intimacy. Children usually reserve their tantrums for the most trusted, safe, and consistent people in their lives—their parents. The next time your child is having a tantrum, remind yourself you're being chosen because your child feels close to you.

Certainly it would be unfair to blame one book for an entire generation of coddled, Thai-restaurant-screaming hell-brats. And with its pastel-tinted multicultural families hugging one another on the cover, *Becoming* is in a way such an easy target that I'm patting it protectively even as I conveniently quote it (yet as one last shot, let me add my favorite batik-skirt-swirling chapter title: “The Dance of Separation”). The above does, however, hint at thinking that gave rise to parenting based a wee bit much on children's self-esteem, by which overpermissive parents cradle, murmur sweet nothings to, and, coincidentally, form loving body armor around a spoiled child who bystanders feel just needs a whack on the butt (humanely swift, scrupulously open-handed, and carefully rage-free as it may be).

Into this process-oriented miasma comes Perry W. Buffington, a Florida-based psychologist whose other cheerfully results-oriented titles include *Cheap*

MARCELUS HALL

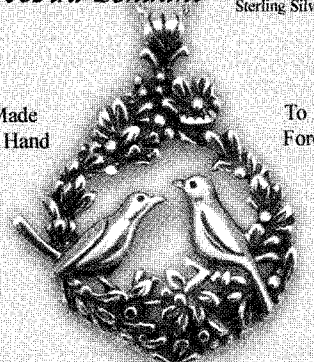
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Psychological Tricks for Lovers and *The Millionaire Code*. After bemoaning soft-on-child-misbehavior philosophies like those sketched above, Buffington claims that the age of parents as friends is over.

For parents to be effective, they must be leaders, exerting responsible power over their children ... This book delineates these "leading" techniques via cheap psychological tricks you can use to become a loving "general of your household." These tricks are designed to help you marshal your troops.

There are those who might find such military metaphors distasteful, and those who do will most likely be further dismayed by Buffington's clear tilt toward things Republican. Nevertheless, this left-coast Democrat found Buffington's intro enticing. For in my own parenting journey, I have to admit, I've come across a few children who, while certainly deserving of love and esteem, have a bad habit of screaming. I happen to be the den mother of a blended family of five children (my two and their three cousins, whose mother suddenly and tragically became incapacitated eighteen months ago) ranging in age from two to eight, not to mention an ever changing cast of their tiny Power Ranger-caped, Hello Kitty-glazed, macaroni-and-cheese-smeared friends. And at some point while working out in the field, driving to Target with what typically felt like fifty-seven children in the minivan, cut off from all access to the books and Web sites of pompous child-development theorists and therapists, I discovered that yelling back in a child's face at the same volume she's yelling in yours can be startling, instantaneously effective, and even sometimes gaily humorous for everyone involved, screamer included. But I am not a trained professional. This *Cheap Tricks* guy—what did he have? Tape child screaming, replay later? Shout through bullhorn? Hold treasured Barbie over garbage disposal, lower Barbie one inch per minute of screaming, track by large wall clock?

Sadly, *Cheap Tricks* turned out to be not quite the dirty, rock-bottom, platinum-blonde-wig-in-a-99-cent-store kind of "cheap" I was secretly hoping for. Still, resolutely genial as he is, "Dr. Buff" does offer a few \$19-lube-job fixes. For instance, instead of endlessly nagging children to stow dirty shoes outside, you should occasionally put small treats in correctly stored shoes. This hit home with me—I could instantly see most of the children I know trying daily, privately, diligently, without anyone's asking, to restage Christmas. Also canny was the "nine-foot rule": if a wastebasket is within nine feet, Buffington says, children will gamely try to use it; farther than that, they won't. And I loved the idea of a "curses jar": put in the dollar value of something the child really wants, remove a portion of the money every time he curses.

Perhaps these sound like hoary tips from some 1958 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, chestnuts a grandmother could recite in her sleep. But it's revealing of our times—when there's an Everest of information on, say, applying for competitive preschools, toys that stimulate musical creativity, and the age at which to start tae kwan do—that such simple

tricks are so difficult to find. Would that there were a magazine called *Carrot 'n' Stick!* There are, as consolation, *Three-Martini Playdate*, *From Here to Maternity*, and *Slacker Mom*: witty, elegant, almost Strunk and White-lean primers.

If the nineties were the romantic, feelings-centered, nurture-over-nature era of child-rearing, in the aughts *Three-Martini Playdate* advocates a highly structured return to civilization, if not actually its discontents. "It has come to my attention that children have become the center of our universe," is Mellor's arch, Austenesque opening.

Gone are the days when a small person of tender age would do as he or she was asked, good-naturedly and obediently, and the rest of the time

THE THREE-MARTINI PLAYDATE

by Christie Mellor
Chronicle Books

CONFESSIONS OF A SLACKER MOM

by Muffy Mead-Ferro
Da Capo Press

CHEAP PSYCHOLOGICAL TRICKS FOR PARENTS

by Perry W. Buffington
Peachtree Publishers

FROM HERE TO MATERNITY:

The Education of a Rookie Mom
by Beth Teitell
Broadway Books

would sit quietly reading or practicing a simple cross-stitch ... He might be trotted out to say his hellos, perhaps to recite, possibly to help serve drinks or pass cocktail peanuts. He might sit on a lap, but only if requested by a familiar grown-up. He never presumed.

Aside from overpresuming children, Mellor's targets are soon evident from such pithy chapter headings as "Saying No to Your Child: It's a Kick!", "Bed-time: Is Five-Thirty Too Early?," "Child Labor: Not Just for the Third World!," "Self-Esteem and Other Overrated Concepts," "Children's Music: Why?," and, of course, a Christmas treat just for me, "Screaming: Is It Necessary?" ("Sadly," Mellor remarks, "the use of child-sized muzzles has never quite caught on, though I can't see why not.") Like Buffington, Mellor is less a friend to all children than a marshaler of troops. As opposed to cuddling misbehaving toddlers and gently sing-songing the "inappropriateness" of what they're doing (as Mellor describes one mother's ineffectually doing, after her son tried to choke Mellor's), she suggests a sequence of old-fashioned disciplinary moves. "Develop a 'stern' look, much like the one your mother used to use on you when you had reached the limit." If things like subsequent shushing and kicking under the table don't work, one can bodily pick up the child and carry him out the door and into the bracing night air: "The change of scenery may snap him out of his mood, especially if coupled with threats of 'No story tonight,' 'No cartoons on Saturday,' or 'The bunny dies.'"

Not that Mellor doesn't endorse reward systems. (After all, with the help of "Our Little Tot's First Martini Recipe," your kids may be delivering rewards beyond your wildest dreams. We remind you: "Child Labor: Not Just for the Third World!") Indeed, when it comes to businesslike administration of the carrot, she unveils some cheap psychological tricks of her own. These are times, for instance, of runaway Tooth Fairy inflation, when even in kindergarten children of divorce already score \$10 a tooth at Mom's house, \$20 at Dad's. To throw your own kids' math off, Mellor suggests, use fan-

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*Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

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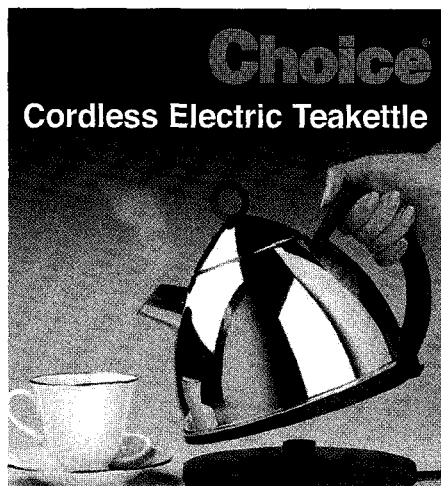
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Even more frugal, astonishingly enough, is "Slacker Mom" Mead-Ferro, who practices such control over rampant familial consumerism that it's almost Zen. Defined less by what she does than what she does not, the Slacker Mom in her book, among other things, does not childproof, buy educational toys, make memory scrapbooks, pick superior preschools, drive her kids to a flurry of after-school lessons, or videotape athletic events—or even, particularly, show up at them. An early "aha" moment came for Mead-Ferro when she contemplated yet another "to-do" for her unborn child: playing Mozart on headphones stretched over her belly. It struck her then that Einstein's mother had not done this, and he was quite bright. Was the Mozart in fact unnecessary? If so, wasn't almost everything else? Thinking back, Mead-Ferro recalls her own mother—the original Slacker Mom—entertaining her kids for the summer by saying simply, "Go outside." And in that moment a valuable lesson was taught.

My parents didn't expect us to be superkids. They expected us to be independent. A kid probably can't be both. To be a superkid, you've got to constantly have parents, club leaders, coaches, and instructors telling you what to do, when to do it, and how. You won't be able to think for yourself, or come up with something to occupy your time, or figure out how to go about it.

Of course, I think true Slacker Parents occasionally allow the television to babysit, and here is where Beth Teitell makes her most notable—and in this grouping, unique—contribution to the Slacker Parenting field. In her chapter "Mother's Little Helper" she brashly admits, "I let my kids watch TV. I don't just let my kids, I encourage it. I push it." But to little avail—starting at 5:30 A.M., her sons prefer much more stimulating

and interactive pursuits, such as fighting over star characters in their Thomas the Train line and dental flossing while their mother is trying to ready herself in the bathroom. Finally, to her horror, they simply snap off the television ("the screen, once alive with joy and animation"). Teitell wonders: Is she the exception in letting her kids watch TV (an alternative book title she considered was *The World's Worst Mother Comes Clean*), or is she the norm? She recalls a day at the park when a boy who, his mother proudly claimed, watched no TV suddenly broke into the *Bob the Builder* theme, of which he mysteriously knew every word. (The mom covered with "He must have seen it at a friend's house.") Says Teitell's one friend who does admit that she lets her kids watch TV, "There's a lot of lying going on. It's like McDonald's shame. No one lets their kids eat at McDonald's, but—surprise! Everyone has enormous collections of Happy Meal toys."

But the most freeing confession comes in Mead-Ferro's chapter "Don't Make Me Mad," where she admits,

I get mad at my kids. And I holler at them ... I try to make sure I apologize, but I didn't stop being emotional or fallible when I gave birth. Besides, I don't think getting mad is necessarily ineffective.

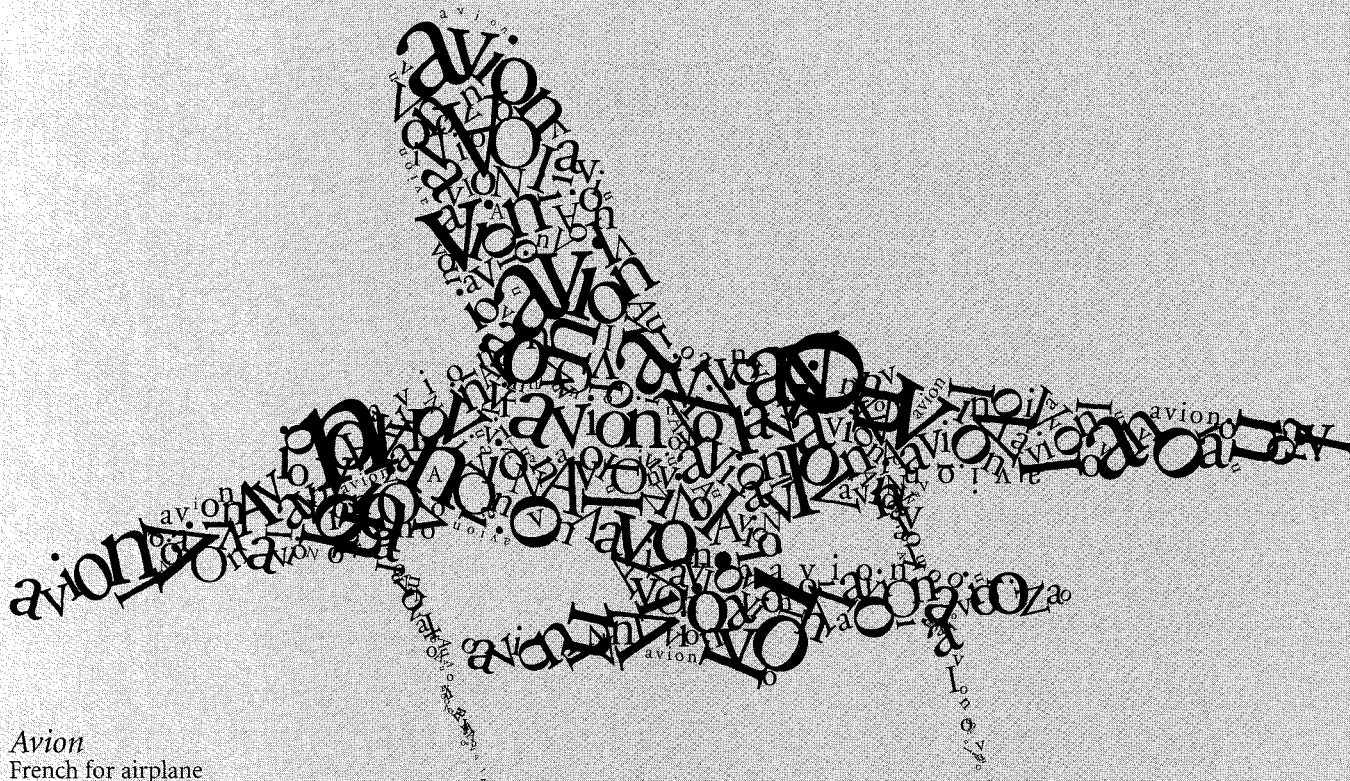
Eureka! Getting mad! A parenting technique so easy, so clear, so visual—it comes naturally, it utilizes a logic everyone can follow, and best of all, it teaches children an important life lesson. What? As Mead-Ferro explains,

One of the consequences of bad behavior is that it tends to make other people irate. So even if you don't have a better reason to be good, you'd better not be too bad or you might really tick somebody off.

Another consequence of bad behavior, of course, is that you might get hurt—which Mead-Ferro argues is generally a lesson best learned, bruise by bruise, by children themselves. In her estimation, today's childproofing and child-protecting are excessive—the hot-water taps that deliver barely hot water, the bubble-wrapped coffee tables, the antibacterial soaps. These do little but reveal the underlying neuroses of par-



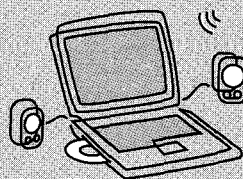
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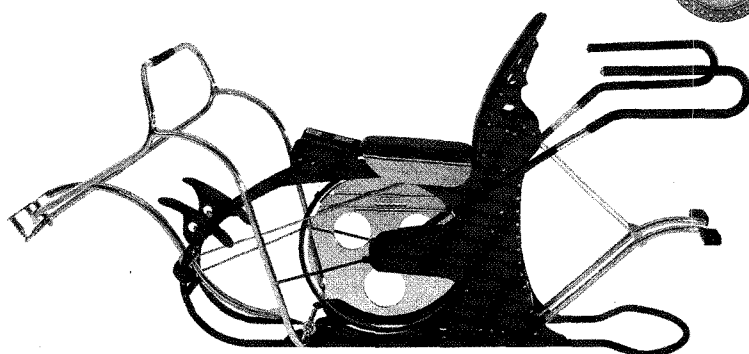
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ents inadvertently emulating puppeteer gods in a universe of only positive outcomes, from T-ball games rigged so that every child wins to magical guarantees that no one in the family will ever come to harm. She muses,

I do wonder if a lot of adults were at some point led to believe that someone else was supposed to be watching out for them. That if they've suffered an injury, or even illness, it must have been because of a fundamental breakdown in "the system," that someone should be held responsible for. In court, preferably. I always want to ask them what system they mean. The solar system?

Who, in short, are the real children? Adults whose first anxious thought, in the middle of a toddler's tantrum, is to control their own reactions? Adults whose Parenting with a capital P is a frantic, high-expectation, quasi-public test of selfhood in which they need to score all As? Rather than becoming the parent you want to be, what a relief now—perhaps, until the pendulum swings back again—to be able to just stagger through the day as the parent you are. Mellor writes,

Do you find that you get nervous when you see your child simply doing nothing, that your left eye starts twitching when you see him lying on his back staring up at the ceiling? Take a long, deep breath. Walk away. Maybe he is thinking. Perhaps he is composing a song, or a poem. He might be following the path of a tiny spider as it makes its way across the molding. He might be contemplating earwax and its many possible uses. It doesn't matter. Leave your child alone. Go find something to do.

In other words, "Go outside"—metaphorically if not literally. It was sound advice for us in the summers of our youth. And it's sound advice for those of us who are now parents ourselves. So, cocktails at five, anyone? I hear a pint-size staff already mixing (a super-kid, after all, is one who can make a perfect Manhattan). We may as well drink and be merry. Who knows what tomorrow will bring? ▀

Sandra Tsing Loh is a writer and a performer whose radio commentaries appear regularly on American Public Media's Marketplace. She can also be heard on KPCC-FM, in Pasadena, California.

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BOOKS

Backfire

A leading observer of militant Islam argues that the movement will undermine itself—if only the United States will let it

BY PETER BEINART

Four years ago Gilles Kepel, a scholar of Islam at the Institute of Political Studies, in Paris, published a very good book at a very awkward time. The book, written in French, was titled *Jihad: Expansion et Déclin de l'Islamisme*. Its thesis, illustrated in impressive detail, was that Islamism—the movement to replace existing Muslim governments with ones that rule according to *sharia*, or Islamic law—was falling apart. Islamism, Kepel argued, was the creation of the generation of Muslim intellectuals who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, the first generation with no real memory of colonial rule. Viewing independence as a fact rather than a heroic accomplishment, these intellectuals felt little of their parents' gratitude toward the nationalist, largely secular movements that had liberated their countries. Instead they saw those movements—now hardened into regimes—as brutal, hypocritical, and corrupt. Independence had brought the expansion of literacy and higher education—an expansion that produced many of the Islamist intel-

lectuals themselves. But because it had provided neither widespread political participation nor economic opportunity, these intellectuals found themselves locked out of a narrow, self-interested nationalist elite.

In their effort to build a counter-movement, they turned to Islam—the most potent mobilizing ideology in

their societies, and one that highlighted the discrepancy between secular, Westernized governing classes and the populations they ruled. But the Islamist intellectuals

couldn't take power alone. They needed the support of two other constituencies: the poor masses flooding into the cities, who would be their foot soldiers, and the pious bourgeoisie, who would be their benefactors. This alliance, Kepel argued, proved impossible to assemble. Except in Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, every Islamist movement lacked one of the necessary elements.

At first these deficiencies were not widely apparent, and in the late 1980s and early 1990s Islamists seemed to be on the march everywhere. In 1987 the

intifada against Israel produced Hamas, which challenged the secular Palestine Liberation Organization's long-running dominance of Palestinian politics. In 1989 a coup brought the cleric Hassan al-Turabi to power in Sudan, giving Islamists their first triumph in a Sunni country. That same year the Soviet Union abandoned Afghanistan, allowing the Arab Islamists who had fought alongside the Afghan *mujahideen* to claim victory over a superpower. Then, in December of 1991, the Islamic Salvation Front swept the first free national elections in Algerian history. Algeria's ruling socialists canceled the second round of balloting, and the country plunged into civil war—a war that many assumed the Islamists would eventually win. Six months later violence broke out in Egypt, as well—another country where Islamism seemed to be growing inexorably stronger.

But whereas many commentators saw this violence as evidence of the Islamists' increasing power, Kepel saw it as evidence of their hidden weakness. The turn to violence, he argued, was a desperate attempt to create across class lines the widespread revolutionary fervor that years of peaceful organizing had failed to arouse. And it backfired. Not only did it provoke ferocious government counterattacks but it horrified the very people it was supposed to inspire. In November of 1997, after a massacre in Luxor that killed fifty-eight tourists and provoked overwhelming revulsion, Egypt's Gamaa al-Islamiya halted its armed struggle. That same year—having alienated their former supporters with six years of terrifying bloodshed—Algeria's Islamists also laid down their arms. Even where the Islamists held power they seemed to be losing steam. In 1997 voters elected the reformist cleric Muhammad Khatami as Iran's president, and by 1999 Hassan al-Turabi was out of power in Khartoum. Violence, Kepel argued, had "proven to be a death trap for Islamists as a whole, precluding any capacity to hold and mobilize the range of constituencies they need to seize political power."

Jihad would have dwelled in academic obscurity but for an accident of timing. The book was sitting at Harvard

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ISLAM AND THE
WEST
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University Press, awaiting publication in English, when terrorists slammed airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Suddenly Americans were desperate to understand the phenomenon Kepel had spent his career investigating. But with close to 3,000 Americans dead at Islamist hands, Kepel's contrarian thesis seemed almost offensive. When *Jihad* finally came out in English, the following spring, it received respectful reviews. But many reviewers said that events had dealt its argument a serious blow. In the March 2002 edition of this magazine Walter Laqueur wrote,

The book is probably the best introduction to Islamism currently available. Nevertheless it shows that even some of the best-informed students of the subject published obituaries too early. Kepel certainly failed to foresee recent developments. In other words, *Jihad* is also a study in intelligence failure.

For the English edition Kepel substituted a less controversial subtitle: *The Trail of Political Islam*. But despite that concession, his new introduction and conclusion clung to the original argument—and incorporated 9/11 within it. That updated argument, which Kepel extends in his latest work, *The War for Muslim Minds*, offers a stark challenge to the assumptions that have guided America's war on terrorism for the past three years.

For Kepel, 9/11 was an epic, intercontinental version of the violence Islamists visited upon Algeria and Egypt in the mid-1990s. In other words, it was the culmination of years of failure. From 1992 to 1996, while Osama bin Laden and his top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, were based in al-Turabi's Sudan, they—like other veterans of the Afghan *jihad*—focused on overthrowing "apostate" Muslim regimes. Bin Laden's primary foe was the Saudi monarchy, which had incurred his wrath by inviting in U.S. troops after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait for protection against Saddam Hussein. Al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian, was particularly concerned with Hosni Mubarak, whom he had unsuccessfully plotted to assassinate in 1995. Al-Qaeda tried to

help Islamists take power in Chechnya, where they had modest success, and Bosnia, where they had none. Gradually, according to Kepel, al-Qaeda's leaders realized that Islamism was losing its struggle against the regimes of the Muslim world. As if to underscore the point, in 1996 Khartoum began mending fences with the West—and bin Laden and al-Zawahiri were shipped off to backward Afghanistan.

It was there, Kepel argues, that al-Qaeda hatched a new strategy. Instead of going country by country, painstakingly trying to build local movements capable of overthrowing individual regimes, it would attack the "faraway enemy"—the United States—in the hope that by humiliating the superpower that guaranteed political order in the Middle East, it would embolden the Muslim masses against their governments. As Kepel writes in *The War for Muslim Minds*, al-Zawahiri was the first al-Qaeda leader "to switch gears and give priority to the international struggle." He continues, "In an age of satellite television, Zawahiri reasoned, international media attention must replace the patient, close work of recruitment through Islamic charity associations that in the past had targeted potential sympathizers and militants."

The first sign of this new offensive came in June of 1996, only a month after bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan, when a truck bomb exploded outside of Khobar Towers, a U.S. Army barracks in Saudi Arabia. Two months later bin Laden issued a "declaration of jihad against Americans occupying the land of the two holy sites [Mecca and Medina]." In February of 1998 bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and other Islamist leaders broadened the new *jihad*, calling for "the killing of Americans and Jews wherever they may be." Six months later al-Qaeda destroyed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The date of the attack, August 7, was no accident: it was the eighth anniversary of Riyadh's decision to allow U.S. troops on Saudi soil. Two years later, in October of 2000, al-Qaeda operatives detonated an explosive-laden dinghy alongside the USS *Cole*, docked at a port in Yemen, killing seventeen Marines.

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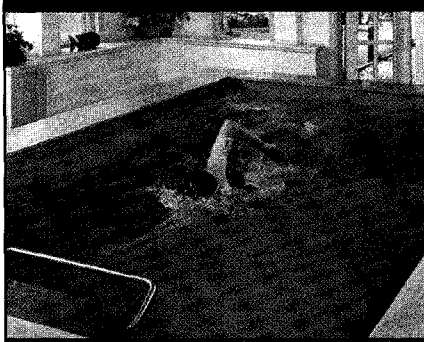


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This strategy reached fruition, of course, with 9/11—which garnered al-Qaeda more media attention than it could ever have dreamed of. But just as Kepel saw the local Islamist violence of the mid-1990s as a cause—as well as a consequence—of the movement's decline, he saw 9/11 as weakening al-Qaeda even further. By the time Kepel wrote the introduction to the English-language *Jihad*, America had routed the Taliban, and it was unclear whether bin Laden and al-Zawahiri had survived the assault. "Desperate terrorist attacks," Kepel wrote, "do not translate easily into political victory and legitimate power. And as it happened, bin Laden and Mullah Omar's hopes to ignite in their fellow believers the fire of a worldwide jihad ... failed miserably." In 9/11 and its aftermath, he added, "the world witnessed, in a snapshot, the rise and fall of the most extreme version of Islamism."

But between April of 2002, when *Jihad* came out in English, and September of 2004, when *The War for Muslim Minds* was published, events challenged Kepel's thesis once again. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, it turned out, were still alive. And although the United States and its allies had captured several key al-Qaeda operatives, the organization seemed far from collapse. In the two and a half years between Kepel's books al-Qaeda had conducted attacks from Bali to Istanbul to Madrid. More important from Kepel's perspective, it had won support in large swaths of the Muslim world. A poll conducted in March of 2004 by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press showed that bin Laden was viewed favorably by 45 percent of Moroccans, 55 percent of Jordanians, and 65 percent of Pakistanis. According to newspaper reports, Osama had become the most popular name for newborn boys in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and northern Nigeria. Although al-Qaeda still had not achieved its central goal of bringing Islamists to power in key Muslim countries, it was arguably closer to doing so in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iraq than when Muhammad Atta and his comrades brought down the Twin Towers. Yet again Gilles Kepel's argu-

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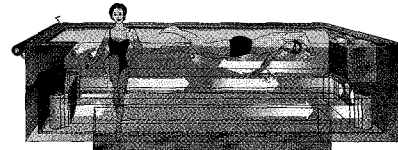
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ment faced the stiff headwinds of conventional wisdom.

The *War for Muslim Minds* is an odd book. It is clearly the product of deep learning; Kepel knows Islamism well enough to see distinctions where most commentators see only uniformity. His discussions of the competing strains in Saudi Islamist thought and the influence of Internet imams on Muslims in France are worth the book's price alone. Yet amid this intricate history and fascinating micro-sociology are bizarre, unsupported assertions—for example, that the largely Jewish neo-cons in the Bush administration identify with Shiites partly because their ayatollahs remind the neo-cons of rabbis.

The book's argument is faint, and submerges during chapter-length digressions. But at its core *The War for Muslim Minds* tries to explain why al-Qaeda, contrary to the predictions in *Jihad*, is not

potentially democratic. Islamism, the argument went, was the Muslim world's version of the democratic movements of Eastern Europe—the language through which Muslims denounced oppression. Kepel, in contrast, had experienced Islamism's ugliness up close. (As he writes in a 2002 memoir-cum-travelogue, *Bad Moon Rising*, he spent time early in his career in war-torn Beirut, where he was robbed at gunpoint by thugs whom gullible Westerners called “Islam-progressives.” Years later, also in Beirut, a group calling itself Islamic Jihad murdered one of his colleagues. The horror of that event, Kepel writes, is something he will never forget.) In the 1990s, when many scholars and policymakers were urging Western governments to make overtures to the Islamists who seemed destined to seize power in Algeria, Kepel was dubious. He has no problem calling Islamism a threat; indeed, he supported the French

Many argue that the war against terror has to occur at the level of ideas. But Kepel feels that al-Qaeda's survival depends on our blunders—and that competence, not ideology, is what we need.

fading. Although Kepel concedes that the organization has inherent strengths, he still assumes that if left to its own devices, it would fail to draw a mass following. The problem, he suggests, is that it is not being left to its own devices. Rather, the Bush administration's war on terror—expressed in disastrous policies toward both the Palestinians and Iraq—is gaining for al-Qaeda an appeal it could never win on its own. In contrast to President Bush, who has responded to 9/11 with an audacious effort to redirect the course of Muslim history, Kepel implicitly calls for something far more modest: prudent management of a threat that—if we let it—can be beaten from within. The war for Muslim minds, Kepel suggests, will be won in Riyadh, Cairo, and the suburbs of Paris. In Washington it can't be won—only lost.

Kepel's critique springs not from the anti-imperialist left but from the realist center. In the 1990s a number of left-leaning academics, in both France and the United States, saw Islamism as

government's recent decision to ban the veil in public schools. And in his mind France and the United States are on the same side in the war bin Laden started—a view that in France today places him in the center, if not on the right. But as more than one American Middle East scholar has pointed out to me, the French center-right is not populated by neo-cons. Kepel is suspicious of ideological crusades and intent on seeing the Muslim world as it is—not as either the left or Paul Wolfowitz might wish it to be. And that realism, which led him to urge a hard line against the Islamists in Algeria a decade ago, leads him to denounce the Bush administration's hard line today.

In Kepel's view, the Bush administration has done al-Qaeda two enormous favors. The first was to scuttle the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Most conservative and centrist American commentators blame the failure of Oslo on Yasir Arafat—who refused Ehud Barak's proposal of a Palestinian state in all of Gaza, most of the West Bank, and

part of Jerusalem, and then launched a second intifada supposedly in response to Ariel Sharon's inflammatory walk on Jerusalem's Temple Mount (the Haram al-Sharif to Muslims). Left-leaning observers, in contrast, generally blame Barak for not making a more generous offer. But for Kepel, blame falls first and foremost on the neo-cons in the Bush administration. He argues,

The neocons wanted an alternative to the Oslo process, one that entailed reshuffling the entire Middle East deck ... This step required that Oslo be abandoned. Sharon's provocative stroll along the esplanade of Haram Sharif in September 2000 and Arafat's instigation of the Al Aqsa intifada implicated both men in this geo-strategic vision.

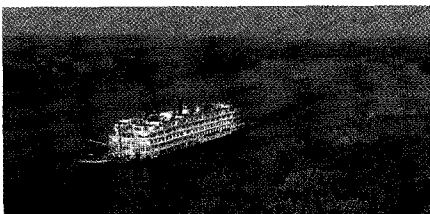
For al-Qaeda, Kepel argues, America's tacit acceptance of a new Israeli-Palestinian war was a godsend. Since 1996, when it began its *jihad* against the United States, al-Qaeda had focused mostly on America's military presence in Saudi Arabia. As al-Zawahiri himself acknowledged in a December 2001 essay, the Islamists who were "the best qualified to lead the *umma* [Muslim community] in its jihad against Israel" were "the least active in championing the Palestinian cause." But in 2000 the new intifada—and Israel's harsh response to it—was galvanizing the Muslim world. And al-Qaeda saw an opportunity to broaden its appeal. In his first broadcast statement after 9/11, on October 7, bin Laden announced, "America will never sleep in peace as long as Israel oppresses Palestine." On April 17, 2002, al-Jazeera broadcast al-Qaeda's first clear statement of responsibility for 9/11—a statement Kepel claims was timed to coincide with Israel's controversial military operation in Jenin. On November 28, 2002, al-Qaeda targeted Israelis themselves, in an attack on an Israeli charter flight and a Kenyan beach resort populated by Israeli tourists. And when the terrorist group accepted responsibility, several days later, it vowed, "Criminal acts against our people in Palestine will not go unpunished." Even 9/11 itself, Kepel suggests, was a grand homage to the Palestinians' mode of warfare: "The September 11 attacks completed, extended,

and fulfilled the suicide bombings that the Palestinians had perpetrated against Israel for many months."

The neo-cons' second gift to al-Qaeda was the invasion of Iraq. In a pamphlet published in London in December of 2002 al-Zawahiri, opportunistic as always, urged Muslims to avenge Baghdad's fall to the Mongols in the thirteenth century—a clear reference to America's impending war against Saddam. In 2004 two letters bearing bin Laden's name urged "Muslim brothers in Iraq" to battle the "incursion of Crusaders and Jews" and sentenced to death Iraqis who cooperated with the American occupiers. Al-Qaeda's adoption of the Palestinian and Iraqi causes helps Kepel answer his own, unstated question: Why did 9/11 not hasten al-Qaeda's decline? Because al-Qaeda linked its potentially alienating violence to the Palestinians' and the Iraqis' widely popular violence. And the Bush administration made that violence possible.

There are serious problems with Kepel's analysis of the Bush administration's foreign policy. He blames the neo-cons for Oslo's collapse when in reality Oslo died on Bill Clinton's watch—on the day Arafat inaugurated his second intifada. That uprising, which Israelis took as Arafat's response to the most expansive peace offer in Israeli history, virtually guaranteed that no similar offer would be forthcoming so long as Arafat remained in power. When the neo-cons entered the White House, Oslo's corpse was already cold. On Iraq, Kepel may be right that the Bush administration's talk of Saddam's unconventional weapons and links with al-Qaeda concealed an ulterior motive: to remake the Middle East. But he also insinuates that top Bush officials knew Iraq had no significant weapons of mass destruction or terrorism ties—a remarkable suggestion to make without supporting evidence. And he says the Bush administration's "most important" rationale for invading Iraq was safeguarding Israel's security—a charge that veers close to Buchananism.

But ultimately Kepel's mistakes and oversimplifications are less interesting than his alternative view of al-



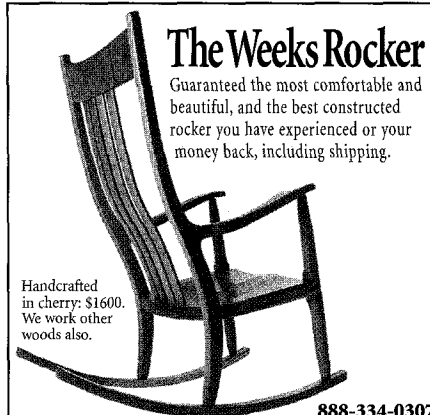
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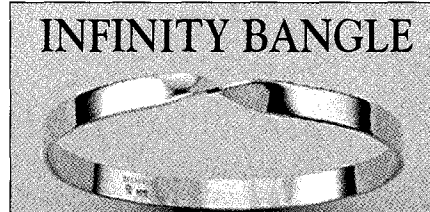


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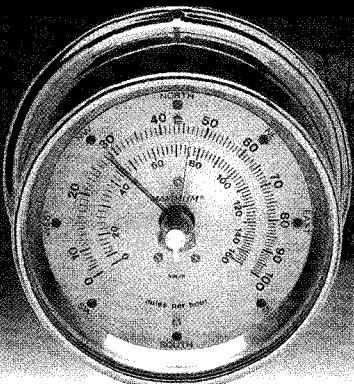
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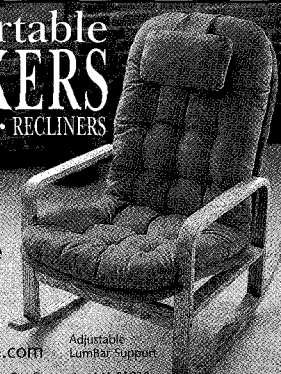
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Qaeda. Since the 1990s, when Islamist terrorism replaced communism as the primary threat to American security, conservatives have looked for state sponsors—rogue regimes to be toppled in what they imagine as a replay of 1989. Liberals, in contrast, have seen terrorism as the dark by-product of a globalized world that governments no longer dominate. As John Kerry urged in his 1997 book about international organized crime, *The New War*, the United States must “lead the world in the fight against ‘private’ criminal enterprises just as we led the world in the fight against ‘public’ criminal governments.” In that crucial—and underappreciated—intellectual divide Kepel is clearly on the liberals’ side. He attributes the Iraq War in part to the fact that the “strategic planners” in the Bush administration were “culturally incapable of grasping an actor that was not, in the final analysis, a state.” And his description of al-Qaeda as a “database” linked “through satellite phone connections and bank accounts in offshore tax havens” fits well with Kerry’s controversial description of the war on terror as “an intelligence gathering, law enforcement, public diplomacy effort”—not a conventional military struggle.

But there is an even deeper divide—between idealists, neo-con and liberal alike, who see America’s key effort in the war on terrorism as ideological, and realists who want to battle a finite group of killers, not a broader world view. For neo-cons like William Kristol and liberals like Paul Berman, 9/11 can’t be answered merely with technical skill—a well-executed terrorist capture here, the closing of an Islamist charity there. The battle has to occur at the level of ideas. It is because the invasion of Iraq came to represent the fight against totalitarianism in the Muslim world that I-can’t-believe-I’m-a-hawk liberals gave their nervous assent. And it is because neo-cons deemed Islamism the new Marxism that they abandoned their traditional suspicion of nation-building.

The War for Muslim Minds gives war-on-terrorism realism the context it has generally lacked. The premise behind the Iraq invasion, after all, was

that Islamism was on the march. Unless America forcibly injected liberalism into the Middle East’s bloodstream, the theory went, Hosni Mubarak would eventually lose to Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Crown Prince Abdullah would eventually lose to Osama bin Laden. But if Islamism is not on the march—if al-Qaeda lacks inherent appeal and can mobilize followers only by capitalizing on America’s blunders—then competence, not ideology, is exactly what America needs. The intellectual fight against Islamism, Kepel implies, is far too intricate to be fought effectively by American policymakers and public intellectuals who lack a deep, rigorous understanding of Islam. In *Bad Moon Rising* he notes, “In the past ten years or so, American universities have hardly accumulated any knowledge at all about the Middle East.”

To idealistic Americans, Kepel offers the classic realist caution that the world is more complex and less malleable than they imagine. And he adds the comforting thought that if left to themselves, Muslim societies may vanquish al-Qaeda on their own. In mosques and Internet chat rooms from Peshawar to Argenteuil, Kepel implies, sheikhs whom Richard Perle has never heard of, employing a vocabulary Dick Cheney can’t understand, may eventually create a post-Islamist politics that makes peace with liberalism and the West. He sees a vital role for the young Muslims of Europe, who, if granted economic opportunity by their host societies, could create a model of tolerant, prosperous Islam that reverberates across the globe. But in these intellectual dramas Kepel sees little constructive role for America—which he hopes will content itself with diligent police work and peace-process diplomacy.

Just after 9/11, when American commentators were bursting with exuberance for the next great struggle against totalitarianism, Kepel’s vision would have seemed crimped and insulting. But perhaps today, in an America bewildered and exhausted by Iraq, it holds some appeal. If realism is returning to fashion, Gilles Kepel may finally have the intellectual wind at his back. ▀

Peter Beinart is the editor of *The New Republic*.

PURSUIITS & RETREATS

MARCH 2005 | THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

INNOCENT BYSTANDER

Feeling Entitled?

Huey Long's aspiration—"Every man a king!"—is at last within our grasp

BY CULLEN MURPHY

"A genuine college degree in 2 weeks!" The e-mail offer from one of America's burgeoning diploma mills has been arriving almost hourly, although about thirty years too late. The sales pitch continues: "Have you ever thought that the only thing stopping you from a great job and better pay was a few letters behind your name?"—letters like B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. "Well now you can get them!"

It's tempting. But one could also just move to Italy. There, a few months ago, an administrative court ruled that students who had earned only a three-year university degree were nonetheless legally entitled to call themselves "*dottore*," or "doctor." This is of a piece with evolving social practice across a broad front. Elementary school teachers in Italy are entitled to be called "*maestro*." Teachers in middle school are "*professore*." A university rector earns the honorific "*magnifico*."

It may be that the country that gave us rococo pastry and the gilded interior of La Scala is especially prone to fancy titles. Beppe Severgnini, a writer for the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera*, speculates that the Italians, having been ruled for so long by outsiders, developed a predilection for titles as a kind of prosthetic self-esteem. But the surge in title inflation is in fact a worldwide phenomenon—in business, in academe, in government.

Title inflation has always been an occupational hazard for autocrats, famously parodied in the opening lines of

Evelyn Waugh's 1932 novel *Black Mischief*: "We, Seth, Emperor of Azania, Chief of the Chiefs of Sakuyu, Lord of Wanda and Tyrant of the Seas, Bachelor of the Arts of Oxford University, being in this the twenty-fourth year of our life ..." Haile Selassie, the longtime emperor of Ethiopia, styled himself "King of Kings, Elect of God, Conquering Lion of Judah." This is by no means a thing of the past. Juan Carlos of Spain, although an exceedingly modern monarch and an ardent democrat, lays claim to thirty-eight distinct titles, including "Duke of Athens" and "Sovereign Grand Master of the Order of the Golden Fleece." North Korea's Kim



Jong-Il, "Guardian of Our Planet" and "Lodestar of the Twenty-first Century," has more than a thousand self-bestowed titles. When, recently, foreign observers thought they detected a lessening of the Great Leader's cult of personality, a North Korean diplomat testily told reporters, "It's false information. You cannot remove the sun from the sky."

America won't catch up with Kim tomorrow, but it's on the march. Though the U.S. Constitution explicitly forbids the awarding of feudal honorifics ("no title of nobility shall be granted by the United States"), in political Washington

and elsewhere the courtesy title "Honorable" (which comes from the British "the Right Honorable Magnificence of Nobles") now applies to virtually anyone who buys a table at a charity event. Universities are adding honorific modifiers like sundae toppings to the names of professorships; the University of Illinois, for instance, offers the option of "Founders," "Jubilee," or "Centenary." High-tech startups have no patience with the bland job titles of yesteryear. *Fast Company* magazine's monthly survey of "job titles of the future" has come across actual people with the titles "idea ambassador," "knowledge sorceress," "chief reality officer," and "curator of the enlightened orchard."

The most pervasive form of title inflation is the extension of restricted honorifics to an ever widening circle of claimants. In 1950 the world chess federation, FIDE, recognized only twenty-seven people as full-fledged grand masters; today there are 930 grand masters. During the Kennedy administration only twenty-nine people held the coveted title of "assistant," "deputy assistant," or "special assistant" to

the president; by the time Bill Clinton left office, in 2001, there were 141 such people. In the corporate world the title "vice president" is so common as to have become almost meaningless—a synonym, nearly, for "employee"—and the title "vice chairman" connotes what a vice president used to be. In his weekly column for NFL.com, Gregg Easterbrook noted recently that the front office of the Houston Texans has a chairman and CEO, two vice chairmen, five senior vice presidents, two ordinary vice presidents, an executive director, and fourteen regular directors. He made a calculation: "If General

55 YEARS AGO IN THE ATLANTIC

"My Father: Leslie Stephen"

In the March 1950 Atlantic, Virginia Woolf recalled her unorthodox upbringing

The relations between parents and children to-day have a freedom that would have been impossible with my father. He expected a certain standard of behaviour, even of ceremony, in family life. Yet if freedom means the right to think one's own thoughts and to follow one's own pursuits, then no one respected and indeed insisted upon freedom more completely than he did. His sons, with the exception of the Army and Navy, should follow whatever professions they chose; his daughters, though he cared little enough for the higher education of women, should have the same liberty. If at one moment he rebuked a daughter sharply for smoking a cigarette—smoking was not in his opinion a nice habit in the other sex—she had only to ask him if she might become a painter, and he assured her that so long as she took her work seriously he would give her all the help he could. He had no special love for painting; but he kept his word. Freedom of that sort was worth thousands of cigarettes.

It was the same with the perhaps more difficult problem of literature. Even to-day there may be parents who would doubt the wisdom of allowing a girl of fifteen the free run of a large and quite unexpurgated library. But my father allowed it. There were certain facts—very briefly, very shyly he referred to them. Yet "Read what you like," he said, and all his books, "mangy and worthless," as he called them, but certainly they were many and various, were to be had without asking. To read what one liked because one liked it, never to pretend to admire what one did not—that was his only lesson in the art of reading. To write in the fewest possible words, as clearly as possible, exactly what one meant—that was his only lesson in the art of writing. All the rest must be learnt for oneself. Yet a child must have been childish in the extreme not to feel that such was the teaching of a man of great learning and wide experience, though he would never impose his own views or parade his own knowledge. For, as his tailor remarked when he saw my father walk past his shop up Bond Street, "There goes a gentleman that wears good clothes without knowing it."

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Motors had the same ratio of titles to revenue as the Houston Texans, GM would boast 1,928 vice chairmen, 4,820 senior vice presidents, and 13,496 directors."

Then, too, there is the sale of "naming rights"—merging a donor's personal or corporate name with that of a monument or institution. Vainglorious and clumsy, the new titles at least achieve a certain hybrid vigor. There's a Nor'wester Professorship in Fermentation Science at Oregon State University, created by the Nor'wester Brewing Company, and a Rubbermaid Home Products Courtyard at Ohio State. At the end of the 1980s only three professional sports arenas had corporate names. Today the majority of them do. The sale of naming rights now extends to transit systems and public schools. Before long we may have the Exxon Corporation 101st Airborne and the Kellogg, Brown & Root Department of Homeland Security.

Does title inflation (or deflation) have any historical correlation with the more general decline (or advance) of civilization? One could cite some suggestive evidence. The early Christians, selfless and close-knit, referred to one another simply as "Brother" and "Sister"; the days of "Your Eminence" and "Your Holiness" came much later. Our own Founding Fathers, seeking to establish a more perfect social order, rejected various baroque suggestions for the title of the nation's chief executive ("His Majesty the President" and "His Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of the Rights of the Same") in favor of something more homespun. It can hardly be an accident that Chicago, the most American and plainspoken of our great cities, recently held the line by refusing to sell the naming rights to Soldier Field.

By the same token, epochs in which people betray a grasping appetite for status are often times of decadence and decline. Think of the ancien régime's array of ever more finely sliced noble distinctions, which the guillotine's blade brought to an end. Recall Edward Gibbon's description of the desiccated nobility in early-fifth-century Rome: "They contend with each other in the empty vanity of titles and surnames, and curiously select the most lofty and sonorous

appellations ... which may impress the ears of the vulgar with astonishment and respect." We know what happened next: the barbarians were at the gates (and they all wanted titles).

It would be going too far to assert any hard-and-fast correspondence between title inflation and social decay. But surely it's worth knowing whether the titles of our age are the equivalent of gold bullion or of Weimar banknotes. It may be that what we need in order to track the real value of titles is something akin to the Consumer Price Index, which monitors the rate of inflation. The CPI is calculated by tracking changes in the price of a "basket" of items, ranging from basics such as clothes, housing, and medical care to miscellaneous items such as cigarettes, haircuts, and funerals. In similar fashion one could compile a representative sample of standard honorifics and examine how they change over time. The calculation might take into account the percentage of the U.S. corporate leadership cadre with titles of vice president or above; the average number of words in the names of endowed chairs at major universities; the percentage of public buildings with corporate names; and the average number of epithets in the official titles of a selection of Third World dictators.

Exaltametrics, as this new discipline might be called, would permit the sort of corrective calibrations now routine in economics. We would be able to say, for instance, that in real terms, adjusted for inflation, the Cappell/Frayard Professional Money Management Group of Paine Webber/BORSF Endowed Professorship in Economics, which you can find today at the University of Louisiana, is pretty much equivalent to an ordinary Jubilee Professorship of Economics from ten years ago. We would not be misled by title inflation into thinking that being a "Lodestar of the Twenty-first Century" in 2005 was any more significant than being, say, a plain old "Lion of Judah" back in 1970.

The new monitoring agency might be lodged in the Wal-Mart Corporation Department of Labor, and I'm both available and qualified to serve as its first Pontifex Maximus. In fact, my doctorate in exaltametrics just came in the mail. ▀

Cullen Murphy is The Atlantic's managing editor.

SPORT

The Magician

The world's best pool player sees shots no one else can

BY PAT JORDAN

At midnight on a bitterly cold January 15 the lobby of the Executive West Hotel near the Louisville, Kentucky, airport was crowded with men and a few women, all waiting anxiously for the guest of honor.

A man in a yellow windbreaker came through the front door and walked toward the registration desk. A murmur rose from the crowd. Everyone stared at him, a small brown man with slitlike eyes, a wispy Fu Manchu moustache, and no front teeth. He wore a soiled T-shirt and wrinkled, baggy jeans. He moved hunched over, his eyes lowered.

People clustered around him. Men flipped open their cell phones and called their friends to say "He's here!" They introduced him to their girlfriends. The man looked embarrassed. Another man thrust his cell phone at him and said, "Please say hello to my son; he's been waiting up all night." The small man mumbled a few words in broken English. Then the hotel clerk asked him his name. He said, "Reyes." Someone called out, "Just put down 'the Magician.'"

Efren Reyes, fifty, was born in poverty, the fifth of nine children, in a dusty little town in the Philippines without electricity or running water. When he was five, his parents sent him to live with his uncle, who owned a pool hall in Manila. Efren cleaned up the pool hall and watched. He was fascinated by the way the players made the balls move around the table and fall into pockets—and by the way money changed hands after a game. At night he slept on a pool table and dreamed of combinations. He had mastered the game in his head before

he finally picked up a pool cue, at the age of eight. He stood on a pile of Coke crates to shoot, two hours in the morning and two hours at night. At nine he played his first money game, and at twelve he won \$100; he sent \$90 home to his family. Soon he was the best pool shooter in Manila. His friends would wait for him in the pool hall after school, hand him his cue when



he walked in the door, and back him in gambling games. He was the best pool shooter in the Philippines when he quit school, at fifteen. By the time he was in his twenties, no one in the Philippines would play him any longer, so he toured Asia. He wrote down in a notebook the names of the best pool

shooters in the world, and proceeded to beat them one by one. He became a legend. People who had seen him play recounted the impossible shots he had made. They called him a genius, the greatest pool shooter who had ever lived. Even people who had never seen him play, including many in the United States, soon heard the legend of Efren Reyes, "the Magician."

In 1985 a small brown man, a stranger, entered Red's pool hall and nightclub, in Houston, Texas. He said he was Cezar Morales, and he offered to play all comers. Over the next twenty-one days he played the best pool shooters in the Southwest, and won \$81,000.

The players he beat argued among themselves about who was the better pool shooter, Cezar Morales or the legendary Efren Reyes. Shortly before he returned to the Philippines, they learned that Morales and Reyes were one and the same.

Over the next eighteen years Reyes won every major pool tournament and title in the world: the U.S. Open, the Challenge of Champions, the World Pool League Championship. He was named Player of the Year in 1995, and World Champion in 1999. He won the biggest prize in all of pool—\$160,000—in Japan, \$100,000 in Hong Kong, and around \$50,000 in a number of other tournaments. The Philippines Jaycees named him an "outstanding Filipino," and the government awarded him the Philippines Legion of Honor. He endorsed McDonald's, and Puyat sporting goods, and San Miguel beer. One of the first things visitors see when they enter the Manila airport

is the image of Efren Reyes. His closest friend was Fernando Poe Jr., who campaigned for the presidency of the Philippines before his recent death.

Reyes and about 600 other pool shooters, mostly men, had come to the Executive West in Louisville to compete in the Derby City Classic pool

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tournament, three events over nine days, for prize money totaling more than \$180,000. They warmed up on seven practice tables off the Booze-seller Lounge, and played their games on twenty-eight tournament tables in a huge conference room down a long hallway. The first event consisted of nine-ball bank games, in which the object ball must hit at least one cushion before being pocketed; the second of one-pocket games, in which each player picks a corner pocket and must deposit all his balls in that pocket; and the third of nine-ball games, in which the balls must be shot in order, 1 to 9, with the last being the money ball. The winners and high finishers in each event were eligible for the overall best-in-tourney prize of \$20,000.

The Derby City Classic is not like most other tournaments—or even matches seen on ESPN, with the referees in black tuxedos, and a ring of polite, hushed fans. The DCC is a gambler's event; the players are less interested in the tournament matches that end at midnight than in the gambling games that run from midnight until 7:00 A.M., or the craps games and Texas Hold 'Em poker that run twenty-four hours a day in the hotel rooms.

The DCC is nine days of hustling pool, cards, and dice for men with such nicknames as Shannon the Cannon, the Scorpion, Scott the Shot, Kid Delicious, Spanish Mike, Goose, the Hurricane, Kid Confidence, the Killer Pixie, and Piggy Banks, and a few women—called, say, the Black Widow or Ming.

I found Spanish Mike, Reyes's trusted adviser, having breakfast in the hotel restaurant. He is a big-bellied man of seventy, from Philadelphia by way of Puerto Rico. "Efren is a poor loser," he told me. "When he plays for money, his eyes get like a snake's. That's his strength, the money. And his knowledge. Sometimes I don't see a shot, but I see his eyes going fast and I know he sees one. Efren is a genius."

Tournament action was in full sway on all twenty-eight tables in the conference room. Spectators drifted from table to table, watching the action, or sat on folding chairs against the walls. On a raised platform at one side of the

room Scott the Shot, the tourney emcee, spoke into his microphone: "All starting times are approximate. If the schedules on the wall read ten A.M., the match could start at five P.M. 'Approximate' means within twenty-four hours." Scott the Shot—Scott Smith—is fifty-seven, with a spiky gray crew cut; he wore a shiny gray suit and a tie showing Bugs Bunny playing pool.

Ming, in black silk pants, flounced around coquettishly at Table 13. The Black Widow, Jeanette Lee, was practicing with her husband, George Breedlove, on Table 25. She wore a tight black sweater with a rhinestone black widow spider on it. Earl "the Pearl" Strickland played on Table 4. A long, lean North Carolinian who was considered the best nine-ball player of the 1990s, he had hit a dry spell that made him touchy and suspicious. He has a reputation for arguing with referees and fans, who, he claims, "laugh at me." At Table 10 was Johnny Archer, the Scorpion, a hunched, sinister-looking man with a black pirate's goatee who was voted Player of the Decade for the 1990s. Ralf Souquet, a trim, bald little man who resembles Tweety Bird, was playing on Table 9. A thirty-five-year-old from Germany, he was the 1996 World Pool Association world nine-ball champion. Reyes played a twenty-one-year-old from Ohio on Table 8. This was the young Ohioan's first tournament—"and I drew the number-one player in the world," he said, trying not to hyper-ventilate. It didn't help that Reyes had drawn a small crowd, which applauded his masterly shots and laughed at his self-deprecation. Reyes smiled when he missed a shot, scratched his scalp, slumped down in his chair between shots, and hung his head as if he were the most pitiful pool shooter in the world. But his disconsolation was not an act; his Filipino friends say he's a simple, humble guy who's astonished by his fame.

Scott Smith said into his mike, "What does a professional pool player have in common with a medium-size pizza? ... Neither can feed a family of four." His audience laughed, but it's true: the best players in the world earn about \$100,000 a year from tournaments. That's why they like to play gambling games.

Every great pool player has three talents to varying degrees: the ability to make shots; the ability to control the cue ball to set up the next shot, which is called playing position; and the intelligence to read the balls spread out on a table so as to determine the order of successive shots.

Souquet plays a maddeningly slow and methodical game, which tends to disrupt the rhythm of his opponent. Archer plays a cautious and precise game, preferring to rely on position to avoid difficult shots. Strickland is an explosive shot maker who can be unbeatable when he is in "high gear," according to Scott the Shot. Reyes plays a fast, flamboyant game, marked by his ability to control the cue ball and make seemingly impossible shots, to read the layout of a table at a glance (he claims to be able to see as far as eight shots ahead), and—his genius—to see possibilities that lesser mortals can't imagine.

"Efren has more imagination and creativity than the rest of us," Archer

says. "We're more basic. He takes one glance and sees it all. He knows things we don't. A few times he's taken a shot I couldn't even envision until after he made it, and I saw it was an easier shot than I'd thought."

"Three times a match he'll take shots I don't see," Souquet says. "He's in a different league than the rest of us. He's the greatest player who ever lived. But he's beatable. I'm probably his worst opponent, because I throw off his rhythm. I usually play by the book. He does wild stuff I wouldn't do, shots I would never take. I like to play Efren, because he is the greatest player. I consider him a friend. But I wouldn't play him in a gambling game. No one in the world will, unless he gives them a spot." In pool parlance a "spot" is the advantage a good player will give a lesser player to entice him into a game. In a game of one pocket Reyes might offer a spot of 9 to 6, meaning he would have to make nine balls in a rack to win, and his opponent would have to make only six.

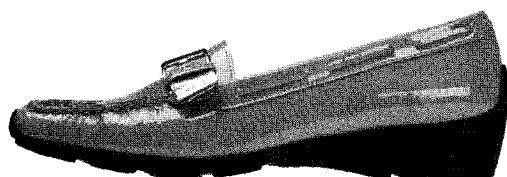
"He's the best I've ever seen," Strickland says. "The luckiest, too. The fans love him and disrespect me." In 1996 in Hong Kong, Strickland and Reyes played a match for \$100,000, winner take all. The first player to win 120 games of nine-ball would get the money. They played several hours a day for three days. By the end of the third day Strickland was ahead, 117 games to 116. Then Reyes ran out the last four games to win the match.

A year before that match, in Reno, Nevada, Reyes beat Strickland in a nine-ball game with what has become known as "the Shot."

"It was the greatest shot ever made in pool," Archer told me. "Efren's cue ball was behind the nine, so he couldn't hit the object ball, the five. It was a no-escape shot. But Efren hit the cue ball off two rails before it cut in the five and gave him perfect position for the six."

In Kentucky, Reyes won his match with the Ohioan easily and moved quickly down the hallway before anyone could intercept him. He is embar-

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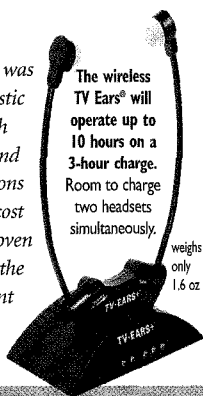
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passed by his fans' adulation. When he got to the indoor swimming pool, he sat down at a table and began to talk in the heavy Tagalog accent he calls Pampang. He articulated each word carefully.

"I now like be famous," he said. "But not morning when fans call me sleeping." He smiled his elfin, mischievous smile, his eyes closing.

Reyes has two kinds of fans: pool aficionados who worship his genius, and Filipinos who worship him. When he plays in Asia and the Middle East, he stays in fancy hotels, many of them staffed by Filipino waitresses, maids, janitors. They see him as one of their own, a man who has pulled himself up from poverty to become world-famous. After his matches they bring him his favorite Filipino dishes of fried fish and chicken and rice. He takes staffers out with him to karaoke bars, where he sings and buys them drinks.

With his fame came money beyond his wildest dreams. "As kid I have no dreams," he told me. "Pool just sport. I never thought make money with pool. Now, I like my kids finish school and family be good." (When he's not on the road he lives with his wife, Susan, and three children in a country town in the Philippines called Angeles City.) "I support all my family, my wife's family. Forty-four, but more kids coming." He smiled his guileless smile. "I give just to family. I don't want anything to me."

Reyes's life today in Angeles City is not much different from the life he saw around him as a child. He putters around his house and front porch in flip-flops, shorts, and a T-shirt. Chickens peck in his front yard or waddle onto his porch and through the house. The house is a meeting place for all the neighborhood children, his relatives, and his cronies. They drink beer all day, play mahjong, have hot-soup-eating contests, and hold cockfights. Reyes rarely plays pool at home. But he does play chess, a recent passion. He learned chess the same way he learned pool—in his head first.

Reyes says the only player he fears today in nine-ball is Strickland. "But many young players are good now," he told me. "Archer. Ralf. Mika [Immonen], from Finland. It a young man's game.

My game only fifty percent of when I younger." In pool, as in most sports, a player's best years are behind him by the time he reaches forty. After that the eyes begin to go—and then, with aches and pains, the stroke. Finally, Spanish Mike told me at breakfast, wiggling his fingers, "the nerves go."

Scott Smith worked his way along the crowded hallway outside the conference room. Before he entered, a man burst through the door and shouted, "Efren's got a game!" The crowd surged toward the door and poured into the conference room, where spectators were leaving the games they had been watching to hurry toward Table 25, in the far corner. The tournament players watched the crowd rush away from them as if in a fire drill. People stood four and five rows deep around Reyes's table, with those in the back standing on chairs, boxes, anything they could find.

Reyes was shooting one-pocket for \$500 a game against Ricky Byrd, a pool-hall owner from Alabama. Reyes had given him a spot of 9 to 3. The crowd watched in rapt silence as Reyes won the first game. Byrd dug into his pocket, pulled out a wad of \$100 bills fastened with a rubber band, peeled off five, and handed them to Reyes.

A man was practicing by himself on Table 26. He looked over at Reyes and the crowd and said softly, "I feel like a fool, but I'm too scared to move."

When Reyes lost the second game, he gave Byrd \$500. Byrd handed the money to a big, light-skinned black man with a stubble of beard, who stood against one wall. The man was wearing a Phillies baseball cap turned backward, a T-shirt, and gray sweatpants. Sitting beside him was Spanish Mike, watching the action through tinted glasses. Some men in the crowd were talking on their cell phones, giving their friends a play-by-play of the action.

Reyes won the sixth and seventh games, to go ahead by one. Then Byrd won the next four games. Reyes was sitting on a chair against the wall. He didn't get up for the next game. One of the fans said into his cell phone, "Efren's in a trap." Finally Reyes shook

his head no. He quit. A small man stepped out of the crowd and said to Byrd, "Play Efren nine-four."

Byrd shook his head. The crowd muttered, and some called out, "Play him nine-four!" But Byrd refused to reduce his advantage.

Finally Byrd turned and pointed at the burly man in the Phillies cap. "Let Efren play Cliff," he said. "I'll put up five dimes [\$5,000] on Cliff if Efren plays him eight-seven."

All eyes turned toward Reyes, sitting on his chair. He stood and said, "I play."

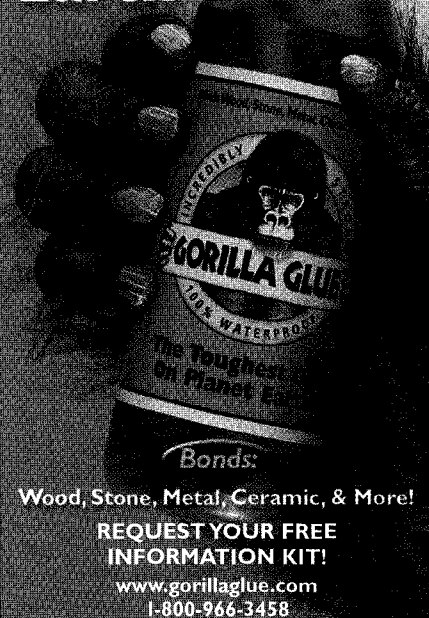
The crowd erupted, people yelling into their cell phones, "Efren's playing Cliff for five dimes!" Men started shouting: "I'll take five nickels [\$500] of that action." "I'll take a dime." Dozens of men waved fistfuls of bills at the small man from the crowd. He collected the bills—maybe \$20,000 in side bets—and wrote names on a piece of paper. Meanwhile, Spanish Mike produced a wad of bills. He counted out \$5,000 and handed it to the small man. Byrd did the same. The game was set: \$5,000, winner take all. Reyes would have to pocket eight balls a rack to win, and Cliff only seven. The first man to win eight games would win the \$5,000.

The first game began with an audience of more than 400 fans, all sitting on one side of the room. The series lasted six hours, full of unbelievable tension and skill. The spectators were witness to the game of a lifetime, between two men who, though rated the top two one-pocket players in the world, had rarely played each other.

Cliff Joyner, in his early forties, is from North Carolina. Despite his bulk, Joyner plays a game every bit as nuanced and delicate as Reyes's. He studied the balls and then tapped the cue ball so that it came to rest behind another ball, leaving Reyes without a shot. This is called a "safety." Joyner's strategy was to play a series of safeties against Reyes, hoping he'd become frustrated and take a wild shot that would leave an open table Joyner could easily run.

But Reyes didn't take the bait. He played Joyner safety after safety. He waited. He studied every one of Joyner's

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ANSWERS TO THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY PUZZLER

S	U	B	R	E	A	L	I	G	N	E	D	B
W	A	L	E	S	D	A	N	O	V	I	C	E
A	N	I	S	L	A	N	D	L	O	D	E	S
M	O	N	E	Y	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S
I	M	D	E	V	E	T	O	E	S	R	P	I
K	A	D	D	I	S	H	R	N	A	C	R	E
B	L	I	S	S	C	E	M	O	T	I	O	N
A	Y	A	B	A	R	R	O	W	R	O	T	T
H	A	R	D	T	O	D	O	P	O	W	E	R
I	V	O	R	Y	F	A	I	R	P	L	A	Y
A	S	S	E	R	T	Y	N	L	O	E	S	S
N	R	E	A	S	S	I	G	N	S	T	O	T

"What's What"

Across: 1. SUB (rev.) 3. RE(AL)IGNED 9. WALES (homophone) 12. N(O + V)ICE 13. N + OMAN 14. L + ODES 15. TIME (rev.) 16. NONE(W)S 17. VE + TOES 19. KADDISH (anag.) 20. NAC + RE (can rev.) 22. IGNORANCE (anag.) 25. EMOT + I + ON (rev.) 28. BARROW (double def.) 31. BREAKING UP (anag.) 32. KNOW + LEDGE (work rev.) 33. IV(OR)Y 34. T + URN + A + BOUT 35. A + SSERT (bress rev.) 36. L(O)ESS 37. REASSIGNS (anag.) 38. TO + T Down: 1. SWAM + I 2. (C)LOVE 3. RESEEDS (homophone) 4. AD + AGES 5. INDOOR (anag.) 6. SI(LE)NCE 7. E1 + DER (rev.) 8. BE(SS)IE (Sis anag.) 10. ANOMALY (an Amelie homophone) 11. TOM + OR + ROW 18. PRO + TEAS 21. ATROPOS (anag.) 22. BAH + IAN 23. SAT + YR + S 24. C + ROF + TS (rev.) 26. M(O + O)ING 27. ROSE (double def.) 29. OW + LET 30. TRY + ST

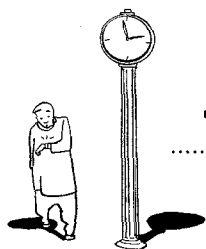
safeties to see if he could find a shot in it that neither Joyner nor any other pool player in the world could even conceive of. In this way the two men nibbled away at each other: safety after safety, then a shot, a pocketed ball, more safeties; each man winning a game, losing a game; the games going on and on for agonizing minutes, the crowd silent, holding its collective breath, until finally the two men were tied at six games each.

Reyes won the thirteenth game to go ahead, 7-6. Joyner began the fourteenth game by pocketing four balls in a row. Then he played Reyes a weak safety by mistake, and Reyes pocketed seven balls in a row before finding himself without a shot. He played Joyner safe. Joyner returned the favor and played Reyes an impossible safety that was rewarded by applause from the fans.

Reyes studied the balls. His cue ball was against the rail, next to a corner pocket. The object ball was against the rail a few inches from the other side of the same pocket. To win Reyes would have to pocket the object ball in the far corner pocket on his side of the table. That seemed impossible. So he aimed his cue at the cue ball to play a safety. He hit the ball too hard, however, and both the object ball and the cue ball went spinning around the table, hitting one cushion after another in what was such a terrible mistake that groans rose in unison from the audience. The paths of the two balls crossed in the middle of the table; the cue ball headed for another rail, while the object ball moved on a 45-degree angle. The audience suddenly realized where it was heading. The 400 fans jumped screaming from their seats as the object ball rolled slowly toward Reyes's pocket and dropped in.

Pandemonium filled the room, people shouting, applauding, yelling into their cell phones. Reyes gave a little punch in the air with his fist and then sat and hung his head. He had just won \$5,000 on a shot that no one else could ever have seen, one rivaling the shot he once made against Strickland. That's why he is called "the Magician." ▀

Pat Jordan is the author of eleven books; the most recent is a.k.a. Sheila Weinstein, a crime novel.



THE PUZZLER

by EMILY COX and HENRY RATHVON

Cloverleaf

This puzzle's grid represents a highway cloverleaf, with word traffic following the familiar pattern along the shaded roadway. An uninterrupted stream of entries proceeds north, east, south, and west on the roadway, moving clockwise around each loop; these Cloverleaf entries are clued in random order. The interior of each loop is filled by seven entries, also clued in random order, which supply crossing letters for the Cloverleaf words. When all clue answers are in place, an appropriate entry may be found circling the central black square in clockwise order. Eleven answers are capitalized.

Last month's Puzzler solution is on page 134.

CLOVERLEAF

- Miss start of cloverleaf in curve, and float (5,3)
- Large vehicle traffic's outside aluminum railings (11)
- Catapult around raised railway with traffic in one direction (7)
- Very hot, circling off westbound construction for repair work (11)
- Vessel taking in five carp (6)
- Taxi turning the wrong way and such disturbed patron of revels (7)
- One getting into cross-dressing also greeting former prime minister (6,6)
- VW Beetle skirting river town (4)
- End traffic with interchanges for one seeking answers (4,6)

NORTHWEST

- Finland, to a native riding back in limousine
- High time for Olympian
- Republican American embraced by stylish European leader
- Vietnamese place an operator in Hawaii
- Small garden implement—pump, perhaps
- The woman's hugged by young, innocent child
- Steer back inside Chatham harbor

NORTHEAST

- Excessively long drive
- Place to bathe unruly tot in busy airport (*two words*)
- Name a head of Islamic sheikhdom
- Jazz saxophonist becomes audible
- South Boston airport's motto
- Cooked one old piece of pasta
- Last character at the end of party drifted off

SOUTHWEST

- Oddly easy stop for petrol provider
- Haul the thing explicitly (*two words*)
- Try catching a young pig
- Card game very loud at a distance (*hyphenated*)
- Godlike, rolling dice about uncertainty

- Instructor informally favoring failing grade
- Picked Korea, for a time

SOUTHEAST

- Wager about race in dark
- Born and died in poverty
- Scattered treat for fish
- Attractive exposition
- Breaking rule if angry
- Vogue* and *Time* split
- Ego involved in seven awful sins, somehow

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.



WORD FUGITIVES

by BARBARA WALLRAFF

Last October this page sought a word for a person "who, in looking up a word in the dictionary, is compelled to look across the page for another, equally interesting entry."

A number of readers thought of *Webster surfer*. Trish Anderton, of Berlin, New Hampshire, suggested *word-dogging* for the activity and used her coinage in a sentence: "Like a setter intent on sniffing out prey, she went *word-dogging* across the page." Ed Masten, of Memphis, wrote, "My own word search is often distracted by *afliteration*, like a bee in a bed of begonias." William R. Phillips, of Seattle, wrote, more ominously, "Some fear that excessive use of the dictionary leads to *refer madness* and is a gateway to stronger language."

Readers particularly liked travel-related coinages. Louis Greenwald, of Sacramento, wrote, "I have been doing that for years. I like to think of myself as a *word traveler*." Rob Longley, of Delmar, New York, wrote, "I think of myself as a *speechcomber*." Larry Malcus, of San Leandro, California, wrote, "I am afflicted with *wanderlex*." Steven L. Auslander, of Tucson, wrote, "If someone consulting the dictionary is doing so in order to add words to a spoken diatribe, he or she may be described as a *hunter-blatherer*. If, instead, he is genuinely interested in the other words on the page, he may be called a *lexplorer*."

Daniel J. Scheub, of Dixon, Illinois, suggested *rubricnecker*. David Terrell, of St. Louis, submitted *addictionado*, on behalf of the tenth-grade English class he teaches. Sara Stadler Nelson, of Atlanta, wrote, "My mother grew up in a tiny town in central Nebraska, and she entertained herself with the dictionary in precisely this way. She went on to earn a perfect score on the Test of Standard Written English. She was, of course, an *autodidict*."

Josh Simons, of Sharon, Massachusetts, suggested, "Perhaps this is an example of *double-entry lookkeeping*."

That's cute. But the term that Steven Clemens, of Maplewood, Missouri, came up with is even cuter (and don't forget that we wanted a word for the person, not the activity): *double-entry bookpeeker*. Clemens takes top honors.

The other fugitive sought in October was a term for saying in an e-mail that a document or file is attached and then sending the message before remembering to attach the file. A number of readers who submitted responses by e-mail amused themselves by including a line like "For explanation, see attached document" but not attaching anything. Ha-ha!



Sends of omission and *e-mnesia* were popular suggestions. Richard Siegelman, of Plainview, New York, coined *absentee-mail*; Teri Viray, of San Diego, *nonsendquitur*; and Barbara Olsen, of Poughkeepsie, New York, *deficit sending*.

Carissa Wodehouse, of Portland, Oregon, came up with *sentropy*. She explained, "The definition of *entropy* in chemistry is the amount of thermal energy not available to do work, but dictionaries also give the meaning 'a measure of the loss of information in a transmitted message.'" W. Sean McLaughlin, of Alexandria, Virginia, wrote, "I was immediately inspired by the arcane grammatical term *asyn-deton* [defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary* as 'the omission of conjunctions from constructions in which they would normally be used'] and thought

minor modifications might yield the right meaning: *a-sendonon*. An alternative derives from the medical community. If *ataxia* describes a lack of muscular coordination, perhaps lack of attaching a file might be called *attachia*."

Erik Bleich, of Middlebury, Vermont, was one of many people to suggest *forgetfileness*. He takes top honors for the word together with his explanation and a bonus word he supplied. Bleich wrote, "In all my years of using e-mail, I never once failed to attach a promised document. I prided myself on this point. Then I read your column. The very next day, I suffered my first case of *forgetfileness*. At least now I have a memorable term for when I forget." And his postscript: "If the oversight is of little consequence, it is mere *forgetfileness*. If it has serious repercussions, it is best called a *docudrama*."

Now BRENDAN J. O'BYRNE, of Regina, Saskatchewan, writes, "The Irish term is *witches' knickers*. But on this side of the Atlantic we don't seem to have a name for the pollution of white disposable plastic bags caught in trees, flapping in the wind."

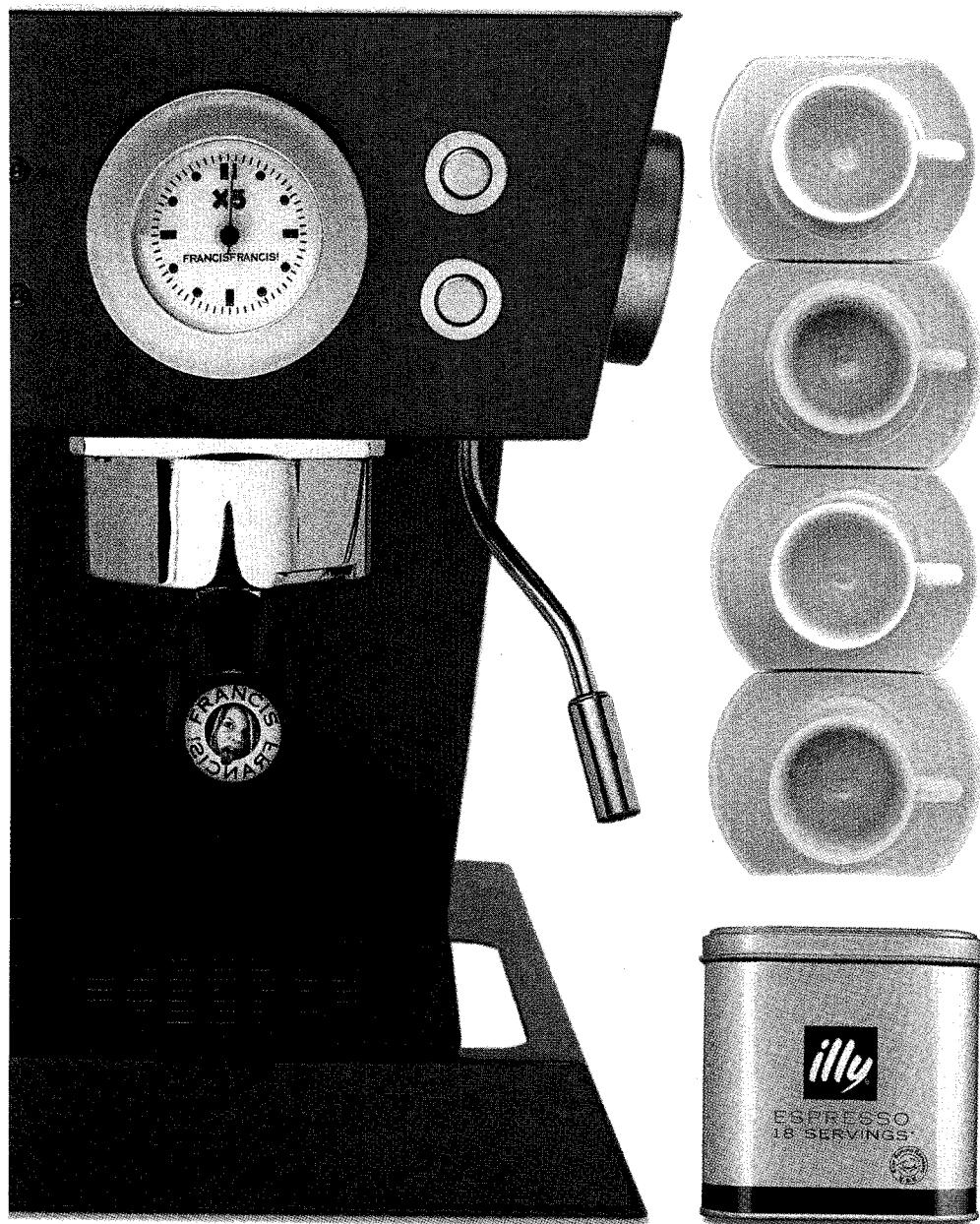
And JUDITH KELMAN, of New York City, writes, "How about a word for that dicey moment when you should introduce two people but can't remember one of their names?"

Send words that meet Brendan O'Byrne's or Judith Kelman's needs to Word Fugitives, The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or visit the Word Fugitives page on our Web site, at www.theatlantic.com/fugitives. Submissions must be received by March 31. Use the same addresses to submit word fugitives that you'd like The Atlantic's help in finding. Letters become the property of Word Fugitives and may be edited.

Readers whose queries are published and those whose words are singled out for top honors will each receive, with our thanks, a selection of recent autographed books by Atlantic authors. The next installment's correspondents will be sent *Angry Wind*, by Jeffrey Tayler; *Road Work*, by Mark Bowden; and *Privilege*, by Ross Douhat.

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Ex-Husband of Love Goddesses

Artie Shaw (1910–2004)

BY MARK STEYN

Artie Shaw was the last of the big bandleaders of the Swing Era. We think of them as musicians now, and a few of them—very few, according to Shaw—were great artists. But for anyone under a certain age it's hard to comprehend the scale of their celebrity—instrumentalists in tuxes fronting orchestras, and yet they were as big as the biggest movie stars. Imagine Britney if she could play a clarinet. Brilliantly.

On the eve of World War II, *Time* reported that to Germans America meant “skyscrapers, Clark Gable and Artie Shaw.” And Shaw lived more like a movie star than Gable did. In the ranks of legendary heterosexuals he's rivaled only by Sinatra when it comes to the number of A-list Hollywood babes he got to see in non-Hays Code situations. He was engaged to Betty Grable when he ran off with Lana Turner. He married Ava Gardner and had an affair with Rita Hayworth. Among his eight wives were Evelyn Keyes, who played Mrs. Jolson in *The Jolson Story*, and Kathleen Winsor, the best-selling naughty novelist (*Forever Amber*), and Betty Kern, daughter of Jerome.

Most fans of P. G. Wodehouse regard his literary landscape as a timeless playground sealed off from reality. “Mr Wodehouse's world can never stale,” wrote Evelyn Waugh. “He has made a world for us to live in and delight in.” But Artie Shaw loomed so large at the height of his fame that he has the distinction of being one of the few real, live, flesh-and-blood contemporaries to invade the Wodehouse canon. In *The Mating Season* a Hollywood starlet recounts to Bertie Wooster her encounter with an elderly English spinster who turned out to be something of a movie fan.

“She knows exactly how many times everybody's been divorced and why, how much every picture for the last twenty years has grossed, and how many Warner brothers there are. She

even knows how many times Artie Shaw has been married, which I'll bet he couldn't tell you himself. She asked if I had ever married Artie Shaw, and when I said no, seemed to think I was pulling her leg or must have done it without noticing. I tried to explain that when a girl goes to Hollywood she doesn't *have* to marry Artie Shaw, it's optional, but I don't think I convinced her.”

When he stopped marrying, he started lecturing on it at colleges: “Consecutive Monogamy & Ideal Divorce,” by an “ex-husband of love goddesses.” “These love goddesses are not what they seem, especially if you're married to one,” he explained. “They all think they want a traditional marriage, but they aren't made for that sort of thing. Somebody's got to get the coffee in the morning, and an Ava Gardner is not going to do that. So you get up and get it, and then you find you're doing everything. And why? Because she's the love goddess, and that's all she has to be.” He had children with a couple of 'em, but didn't care much for them either. “I didn't get along with the mothers,” he said. “So why should I get along with the kids?”

Still, celebrity broads were a rare compensation in a world where everything else was a pain in the neck. He was a swing bandleader, but he hated the word “swing,” and he was a jazz musician, but he hated the word “jazz.” He resented singers, and despised dancers, and loathed fans; the audience was a bunch of “morons,” and the musicians were “prima donnas,” and the ones who weren't were hacks who did that cheesy synchronized swaying with the saxes and the trombones that the morons were dumb enough to go crazy for. Glenn Miller? “It would have been better if he'd lived and his music had died.” Well, okay, lots of jazz guys have a problem with Miller; how about Benny Goodman? “Musically, he had a limited vocabulary,” sniffed Shaw.

Gene Lees has described the big bands of the late thirties and early forties as the sound “that will not go away.” For Shaw—restless and obsessive—that was the problem. So he went away instead. He started quitting the music business “permanently” a few months after his first hit, and kept on quitting it. But every time he came back, the fans were still there, demanding “Star Dust” and “Frenesi.” He found out it was one thing to “Begin the Beguine,” quite another to try and stop it. He told me, “Every time someone comes up to me and says, ‘Oh, Mr. Shaw, I love ‘Begin the Beguine,’ I want to vomit.”

“Sorry,” I said, “but I *do* love ‘Begin the Beguine.’”

“Well, then, you make me want to vomit,” he replied. “I did ‘Beguine.’ It's over. If you want it, get the record. People say, ‘Why did you give up music?’ I say, ‘Have you got every record I ever made?’ They say, ‘Well, no.’ Well, get 'em all and then come back and complain.”

He made “Beguine” a hit, all 108 bars of it—the longest standard in the standard repertoire, thanks to Shaw. Cole Porter wrote it as a piece of faux exotica—“Down by the shore an orchestra's playing / And even the palms seem to be swaying”—but Shaw threw out the lyric and made the tune jump. It may have made him vomit, but people love that record because, two thirds of a century on, the double thwack of those opening bars is as wild and exciting and unmistakable as anything in American music. It's nothing to do with Porter, just a little figure Shaw and his arranger Jerry Gray cooked up, and then his clarinet comes in riding the rhythm section. You don't have to do it like that, you can play it a thousand different ways, but Shaw's recording opened the way for all the others. Cole Porter understood. On being introduced to the bandleader, he said, “Happy to meet my collaborator.”

Three of the best bandleaders of the period were clarinetists—Shaw, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman—and it seems to me that's the core sound of the era, so seductive, so insinuating. Artie, naturally, had no time for that kind of talk. According to him, the executives liked the clarinet because, in those days

of primitive recording, its higher pitch made it cut through the band more clearly than the sax. Whatever. Digitally remastered and cleaned up, the arrangements still sound good. On his smash 1940 recording of "Star Dust," Shaw's solo manages, in just sixteen marvelous bars, to sum up the broad legato sweep of Hoagy Carmichael's tune and yet get giddily away from it in those lovely triplets. There's so much going on in those early hits—joyous, explosive vamps that for many listeners became part of the song. You can find later recordings of "Swonderful" and "My Blue Heaven" that aren't performances of the numbers so much as of the Shaw band's arrangements of them.

As much as he reviled the music biz, he had little time for the pomposity of post-big-band jazz. "It doesn't have to sound like broken crockery to be jazz," he sighed. "It's solemn rather than serious. I told Clint Eastwood that *Dirty Harry* was the closest to art he ever got. That picture's America as it really is. Whereas a picture like *Bird*, which was meant to be a serious thing, was solemn and boring. If you're going to pick an artist who's at odds with his time, you don't pick Charlie Parker. He was worshipped in his lifetime. He just screwed up."

Shaw went into music just to make enough money to finish his education. He sold 100 million records and found out it wasn't about the money. For most of its practitioners, the point of jazz is that it's not fixed, it's never the same, it's improvisational. For Shaw, that's what made music frustrating. "The trouble with composing is that when it's done, it doesn't exist. It's just notes on a piece of paper. Until it's performed. And each performer will stick his own thumbprint on it and change it. Whereas in a book there it is, you can't change it. If you read Thomas Mann, you're reading Thomas Mann. Nobody improvises around his sentences. The two most honest and pure media are painting and literature. Van Gogh's *Starry Night* remains the same wherever you hang it. You can achieve

your perfection. In music, you can only approximate it."

So he gave up the clarinet, and became a novelist, and a dairy farmer, and a film producer, and the fourth-ranked precision rifleman in America. A decade back he made his only visit to Britain, for a one-night stand conducting Prokofiev, Mozart, and some of his old hits at the Royal Festival Hall. He'd been a hero to a colleague of mine for decades, and was supposed to be interviewed by him for the BBC. But my friend fell ill, and I got the call to come in at the last minute. Listening from his sickbed, my pal scribbled me a note saying he'd been "horrificed" by



Shaw, but I loved that interview. Cole Porter said of the Duchess of Windsor's conversational style that "she always returned the ball." Shaw couldn't wait that long. He leaned over your side of the net and whacked it down your throat while you were still serving. I mentioned his version of "These Foolish Things" because it was co-written by a BBC producer, Eric Maschwitz. "So what?" snapped Shaw. "The song doesn't mean anything. What I did had nothing to do with the tune. The last eleven, twelve bars I did that

cadenza—that's as close to perfection as I'll ever get." It was one of his last records. In 1954 he put his clarinet away, never got it out again, and never wanted to. "I did all you can do with a clarinet. Any more would have been less."

As for Artie's fellow bandleaders, the sound may not have "gone away," but a lot of the business did, and Dorsey and Goodman found themselves like most celebrities, clinging to a moment as it recedes into the past. When Shaw decided to pack it in, Duke Ellington told him, "Man, you got more guts than any of us."

"I can say truthfully what very few people can say—that I did something better than anyone else in the world." And he did: he was the best clarinetist, the one with the fullest tone and the slyest shadings. And then he stopped, and did other things, and outlived every other bandleader. "My life turned out the best, too."

To his "dimwit" wives, he was a deranged obsessive. To his estranged sons, he was a miserable, lonely man. But he was chasing different priorities. "The Mozart Clarinet Concerto, we know that's a good piece of work. Here it is a couple hundred years later. Here's some of my work fifty years later. I would say if a piece of popular music lasts fifty years, it's got a good shot

at what we laughingly call immortality. We're aiming to transcend this short lifetime. You hope to put a footprint where it will last a little while."

He certainly left his mark on Evelyn Keyes. If he went into a bathroom and saw the toilet roll hung up to unwind from the back rather than the front, it drove him nuts. Years after their divorce she said, "Every time I change a toilet roll, I think of Artie Shaw." ■

Mark Steyn is a columnist for Britain's Telegraph Group, the Chicago Sun-Times, and other publications.

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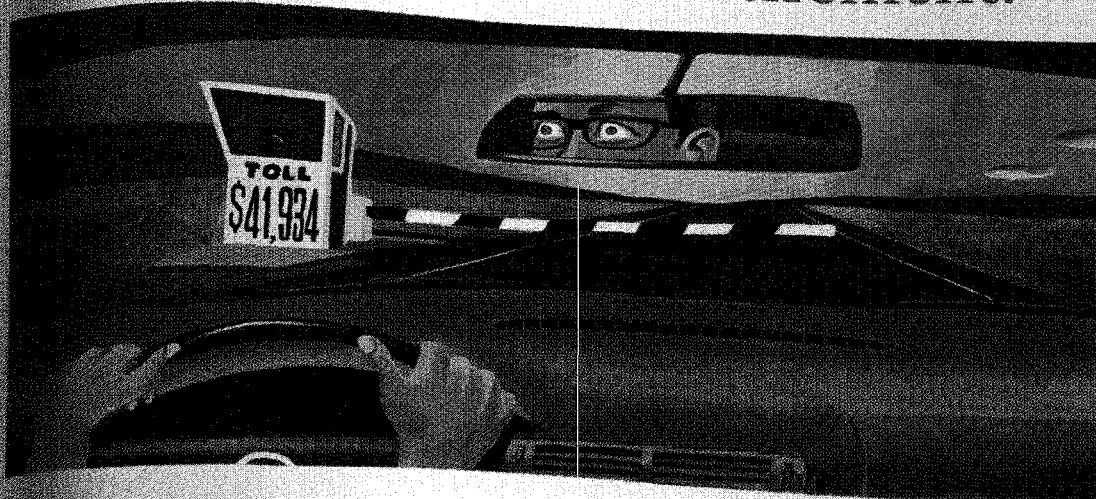
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